Change the World!

Michael Gold

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Michael Gold

FOREWORD BY ROBERT FORSYTHE

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FOREWORD by Robert Forsythe

This introduction has been started four times, being by turn whimsical, bubbling, ponderous and analytical, and it has ended in each case as a love letter for Mike Gold. There have been critics who have surveyed Mike's writings with thoroughness and, occasionally, with sense, and I suppose I have a duty in the matter but I suffer from a malady which makes me dislike people who dislike Mike and an inability to disassociate him from his work.

If I say that I wish to heaven I had written the essays in this book, I say everything that an introduction could possibly say. Quite aside from my opinion of him as an individual, M. Gold happens to be an artist. I don't think you will find anything better than his "Love Letter for France" and I have for that piece of work and a dozen others in the book a feeling of envy which may not become me as a rival essayist but surely qualifies me as the writer of this preface.

Perhaps the most common indictment of Mike is that he writes more with his heart than with his head, and I can never hear that brilliant commentary without looking steadfastly about for a fence paling with which to brain the critic. My grudges are apt to disappear with the coming of dusk but I still treasure a feeling of pleasure over the passing of *Vanity Fair*, which once nominated Mike for oblivion on the ground that he shouted too loudly or

was too anguished or mannish or something. The notion of that particular period seemed to be that Sacco and Vanzetti were possibly innocent but why lift the voice. Mike has always lifted the voice and he has worn his heart on his sleeve and he has dared to feel deeply about important matters, which is still the sin cardinal in politer literary circles.

Perhaps the best example of Mike's essential rightness is his famous attack upon Thorton Wilder. Strictly speaking Gold is no critic at all but the Wilder review was so vitriolically correct that it literally created a new school of writing and badly mangled the old one. No decent critic would have written such a review. He would have *iffed* and *anded* and *butted* it around until it resembled something by Mr. Ernest Boyd and would have had exactly as much weight as a literary pronouncement in the *Christian Science Monitor.* There will be theses written in years to come proving, and perhaps rightly, that Mike went too far. That will never alter the fact that when Mike penned that particular bit of dynamite it was so perfect that it took on the aspect of a message from above.

I can still recall the shock given the editorial staff of a so-called Quality magazine which had been strangely prompted to ask Mike for a statement on what Communism would mean to America. They confessed that he made out an excellent case, but why, they moaned, did he have to go about it in that violent way. Upon reflection they decided that it would be impossible to use the article but would be glad to let him place it elsewhere and would pay him thirty dollars for the trouble he had gone to. "Thirty pieces of silver," said Mike, a little puzzled by the symbolic meaning of it all.

The supreme virtue of Mike and what makes him so

distasteful to people who resent his ideas is that he can be most gloriously right even when he is a little wrong. That is where the heart comes in. You can't go far astray when you employ an organ which beats with something besides fear. Because of that heart he can take chances that would ruin another writer. His most deeply felt pieces would be maudlin in the hands of anybody else. He reacts deeply, he writes passionately and honestly and he doesn't pull his punches for fear of making a spectacle of himself. That is the essential Michael Gold but as you will see from the present essays, he has fancy and wit as well. When I think of his article, "What Cheer, British Empire?", I become downright churlish with envy.

The fact that most of these pieces were done as Mike's daily column in the *Daily Worker* only adds to my wonder. Anybody caught mentioning the circumstance as an apology will be dealt with by me personally. Daily or not daily, they are superb and, without getting into the field of invidious comparisons, I don't think anybody has written better columns in recent years.

When Sinclair Lewis in his Nobel Prize address included Mike among the few American writers who deserved world attention, he paid a great compliment to his own powers of discernment. *Jews Without Money* is an American classic, not only the best book ever written about the New York slums but a literary achievement of high distinction. If there is any lingering doubt as to where I stand in the case of Gold against the World, I suggest that the reader start with the first essay and continue through to the end and lift the voice aloft in proper hosannas. Only rarely is there an opportunity to become devout in a cause so worthy.

MUSSOLINI'S NIGHTMARE

LIKE most bluffers, super-salesmen and murderers, Mussolini doesn't sleep so well. Lately, though the days have been filled with glory and glitter, the nights have been awful. For instance, after a historic day on which he had told England to go to hell, and sent another 50,000 boys to the deserts of Africa, and invented a magnificent new uniform for himself, and had been freer than usual from his chronic indigestion, there was this particularly bad dream.

Benito had sat up late, writing another insulting note to Ethiopia. He took his stomach pills, removed his military corset, and the flunkey provided him with his imperial hot water bag. His favorite young masseur rubbed his aging body, that carcass which found it harder every day to maintain the Peter Pan role of flaming youth that fascist dictators must play. Well, Musso was comfortable enough and was dozing off pleasantly, when bang! back he was in the whole six-day bicycle grind of being a great dictator!

He had been dreaming, it seems, of spaghetti, war, and beautiful blackshirt virgins, when suddenly Napoleon butted in.

"Greetings, Benito," muttered the little Corsican dictator, a sneer on his pale face.

"Greetings, Bonaparte," said Busy Ben, irritably.

"Why do you visit me at this hour? I must rest now. And why that jealous mien?"

Napoleon would have laughed except that dictators are maniacs who cannot laugh.

"Jealous?" he sneered. "Of you? You for whom the hangman waits only six months or a year away?"

"Bah!" said Mussolini, bravely. "I've done well enough up till now; my luck and brains will again carry me through."

"Bah!" said Napoleon in turn. "I had a luckier star and a better brain than yours, and I landed on St. Helena."

"I refuse to argue with a failure!" said Mussolini, turning his back, and hugging his hot water bag. "Avaunt!"

Napoleon grew larger and larger, and suddenly floated to the ceiling, medals, boots, cocked hat and all. Then he settled with a loud clunk on Mussolini's chest.

"Little Ben," he whispered, "every dictator has been a failure. Do you know of one who succeeded? Go on yelling; you can't bluff me or history, you poor stuffed imitation of myself. Where are the dictators of yesterday? They died in exile, or of the daggers of assassins. And their systems cracked with them."

"No, no!" shrieked boisterous Ben. "I will last forever! Fascism will be here for a thousand years!"

The ghost of Napoleon did a strange thing. It let out an enormous belch that filled the room with stifling poison.

"Gas!" said Napoleon. "We are things of gas, we dictators! I thought I could stop a people's revolution, Benito. But I died on St. Helena, and the revolution went on. You have betrayed a people's revolution, too. But they will win in the end; they always do."

"They, they?" shouted Musso defiantly. "Who's they?"

"The people," whispered Napoleon coyly. "As Abe

Lincoln said, God must have loved the common people, since he made so many of them! As Voltaire said, erase the infamy! And as Hoyle has said, a full house beats a pair of kings! Look before you leap! A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush! The paths of glory lead but to the grave!"

He would have rattled on with this nonsense, but Mussolini, infuriated, leaped up, threw his hot water bottle at Napoleon. The little Corsican vanished, chuckling grimly, and trailing a noisome odor of poison-gas and death.

Mad Musso sweated nervously after this encounter. He tried to compose himself for sleep, and to think only about pleasant things, about his medals, his uniforms, his speeches. But then a tall figure appeared, a pale man with a high, pure forehead and mournful eyes. He was entirely nude, and from forehead to ankles he was crossed with ghastly wounds.

"Go away!" Benito shrieked, his pop-eyes bursting out of their head. "Who are you?"

"Matteoti," said the tall figure, quietly, "Matteoti, whom you had your gangsters murder. Like the thousands of your former Socialist and trade union comrades whom you murdered. Do you think we are forgotten? Can even you forget us?" He loomed larger and larger over the frightened dictator. "Traitor, we will be with you to the end. We will march beside you in Ethiopia and in Austria. We will be in the factories where your munitions are made. We are on the little farms, and in the hearts of mothers. We will escort you to the gallows when they hang you."

"You are dead and done with!" Mussolini shrieked.

"You are only a bad dream! The trains run on time in Italy! The heroic age has begun!"

Matteoti answered nothing, but his silence was worse than any words he might have spoken.

"Who will hang me? Who will dare hang me?" Mussolini shrieked.

"The people," said Matteoti, blood pouring from all his wounds. He vanished.

A little wrinkled old peasant woman took his place before Mussolini, "Mother, what are you doing here?" stammered the dictator. "Go away, mother, you have nothing to do with politics."

The little old woman wept over Mussolini. "My son," she quavered, "why have you been so bad to your own people? Is it Christian? The peasants are hungry, and here you take their sons for another war."

"Mother, mother, go away, or I'll have you arrested as a rebel!" shouted the desperate dictator.

But the mother continued sadly: "Your father was a worker and a Socialist. Now he is very angry at you. He would not come with me to warn you."

"Warn me? Against whom? Whom do I fear?" Mussolini shouted.

"The people," said his mother, quietly, and she too disappeared, while Benito, out of sheer habit, shouted, "Arrest her! Give her the castor oil!"

But it was not the end of the night. Red flags filled the room, and the strains of the *Internationale.* He pulled out his automatic and shot the full clip. A great black stallion cantered into the bedroom. It snickered at him, again and again, maddeningly. Napoleon returned with the Empress Josephine. They danced a can-can on Mussolini's bed, dripping blood. Somebody dumped a barrel of

medals on Mussolini, and he could not breathe. He was flying in an aeroplane next, and the sky rained lemons, leaflets and spaghetti and broke his wings. He was falling, falling—

Would it never end? The Czar of Russia marched in, at the head of an army of naked princesses. They sneered and pooh-poohed Mussolini. It was sickening. A young Italian peasant boy, playing a shepherd's flute, suddenly turned into a machine-gun that shot into Mussolini. He fancied next that he was in a great hall, where all the glittering kings and rulers of earth were assembled. Mussolini was making one of his tremendous speeches to them, but they seemed not to hear. They were pointing at him, and laughing. He looked down; horrors, he had no pants on!

And again red flags and the *Internationale* of his youth filled the room. His big blacksmith father appeared and with a hammer banged him on the head to the beat of the *Internationale.* A million hens, with faces like Russian dukes, flew around the room, clucking and cackling, and covered Mussolini with their droppings and other Freudian symbols. Suddenly he began to strangle; he was being hanged!

"Mamma," he screamed and woke up. "Help, help, lights!" The flunkies rushed in; they were used to his nightmares, and they clicked on the lights.

Shivering, Mussolini sat down at his writing table, and drew up a set of new and more terrible instructions. . . . Every Socialist, Communist and liberal in Italy must immediately be hunted down and shot, once and for all. After years of absolute power, Mussolini still feared his chief enemy, the people of Italy; they still brought him bad dreams.

HOW THEY PICKED A HERO

How the idea of a farmer's theatre reached a little town up in New York state, I don't know. But soon after the farmers' milk strike, the young fellows in this community decided that the best way to raise money for the farmers' union was to give a play.

So four or five of them got together and wrote a play. It was very realistic. Painfully, step by step, it showed the way the idea of a union had spread in the region. Then how the strike had been called, and the fighting that followed—lots of fighting.

Now in this particular town there was a blacksmith who had played a leading role in the strike. One day the State troopers came to arrest him at his forge. The blacksmith was a powerful giant, and a one-hundred per cent American. His granddad had fought in the Civil War. Other relatives had fought in the American Revolution. He had always paid his taxes promptly. He was the father of a family, a church-goer and Republican, and had never been arrested in his life.

So when two State Troopers called on him, with a warrant, this blacksmith waxed righteously indignant. As bravely as any Elihu Root or Nicholas Murray Butler, he declared himself a staunch defender of the Constitution, and laid out the troopers with the pincers he used for ripping off horseshoes.

They managed finally to arrest him, of course, but the battle became one of the legends of the strike in that region. And of course, it had to be in the play, of which the blacksmith was sort of the hero.

Well, there it all was in the script the boys had pencilled together by lamplight through so many long farm nights.

And who was going to play that part? The blacksmith refused; he was a family man, a taxpayer, Republican and churchgoer; acting was for the unmarried youngsters, he said.

This created the first stumbling block in the production. Because, you see, the play had to be as real as the boys could make it. If there was a blacksmith in the play, he had to be as strong as the real blacksmith. All the farmers knew the real blacksmith, and if the play had some little skinny runt doing the part, the farmers would say it wasn't a good play or true enough.

So the boys scratched their heads. Finally, they decided to have a contest to see who should play the blacksmith's role.

One afternoon, behind a barn, they got some wooden stakes and borrowed the blacksmith's biggest sledge.

And each one of the actors trying out for the hero's role had to swing the sledge and see how far he could drive a stake in the ground.

It was a mighty exciting try-out, and one of the boys, a husky lad of eighteen who had secret ambitions of becoming a wrestler or prize-fighter or something, managed to win the stake-driving contest.

So he was cast for the hero of the play.

Rehearsals began in the barn. They went on for weeks, and the boys had a tough time of it. It wasn't as easy to put on a play as they'd imagined. For one thing, it was hard to remember all those words. For another, they had to have a few girls in the play, and none of the parents would allow their girls to act; it smacked of sin, somehow, and might give them ideas of running away.

And then people heard about the rehearsals, and

farmers would drive in and watch and joke and make suggestions and throw everyone into a state of confusion.

Also, it was hard to get the cast together when you wanted them; there was always work to do around the farms.

But the boys persisted. They got false whiskers, and two State Trooper's uniforms. The other costumes, naturally, they already had; just the same overalls and lumberjackets they'd worn on the picketlines.

And the play opened one night in the local Grange Hall. Everyone came; and paid real cash to get in. The boys set the scenery, and put on their whiskers, and were nervous as young bulls in spring.

And the curtain went up, and the play began. It went off darn well, too. The audience liked it. They cheered the pickets. They laughed at the pompous speeches of Mr. Ronney, the local manager for the Dairy Trust. They hissed the hard-boiled State Troopers. They wanted to throw things at the scab farmer.

Came the climax. The blacksmith was at his forge, whistling realistically, and hammering great realistic blows at a horseshoe. It was as real as life.

Then the State Troopers swaggered in, hard-boiled as in real life. A groan went up from the audience. Somebody yelled, "Look out, Elmer, they've come for yeh!"

And Elmer the mighty blacksmith wheeled around, and with a mighty blow of his pincers laid out the first State Trooper.

A sudden scream went up from a woman in the audience. It was the mother of the young actor who was playing the State Trooper.

"Stop!" she screamed, "you're killing my boy!" She rushed up to the stage, and leaped upon it. She took the

boy's head in her lap. Sure enough, he had been knocked out. Too much realism!

It stopped the show. The boys had to start rehearsals all over again, and learn how to be less realistic. And they had a hard time finding another State Trooper; all the mothers were against it.

But such are the hardships of all pioneers. Did these mishaps stop the rise of the proletarian drama in this little corner of America? No, sir, it did not; the show was given all through that valley, in a dozen farming villages. It made quite a nice sum for the union, and the boys are planning another play.

A LOVE NOTE FROM THE K. K. K.

I HAVE just received a letter from the Ku Klux Klan of Brooklyn. On its envelope, which came safely through the government mails, though it contains a threat, was pasted a large label reading, "We Have Our Eye On You—K. K. K."

I haven't turned this letter over to the police for investigation, though it contains some pretty violent language. I am sure such procedure would be useless; the police are here to protect only capitalists who receive threatening letters.

I have done my own investigating, however, and can guess fairly well just who sent the letter. I would like to say to the anonymous gentlemen of the K. K. K. that if they have their eye on me, I, and a few hundred thousand other people in New York have our eye on them, too.

Do they really think they can scare us? Do they think they can frighten the million unemployed of New York, for example, into stopping their demand for food? This capitalist system has sunk below the point where its thugs can terrorize the people. When people are starving, they must fight. A man must fight for his dear ones—it is the law of nature.

It is the courage of desperation that is creating a radical movement in America. All the bosses and their K. K. K. employees cannot silence the demand for bread that sweeps the nation.

Perhaps I ought to give the contents of the letter, in all its fascist beauty. It goes as follows:

"Michael Gold:

"So you poor doped up fools are sure you are going to have a Soviet America are you? Well, let me tell you mug, this country is going to remain an American country and if you and your ratty kind don't like it we'll throw you the hell out, and make you like it.

"Some people say a Communist is a worker. Well, I'll tell you what a Communist is.

"A Communist is an alien who in most cases is a ship jumper and who harps on relief pay rolls and wants to be supported without doing a stitch of work. A non producer but a disturber and a pest and there is only one way we veterans will deal with you and that is when the time comes with guns.

"We have men placed in your ranks right now and we are going to tear you far apart when the time comes.

"VETERAN."

Isn't it pretty? And doesn't it give a picture of the mind of the writer as clearly as any rogue's gallery camera?

He may be a veteran, but he is not representative of the millions of workers' and farmers' boys who made up the American army in France. They suffered and bled in the trenches, these millions and now they tramp the streets, hungry and jobless. Their demands for a bonus is bitter as it is because they are so much in need. But the K. K. K. "veteran" who signed this letter is not one of them.

He is, indeed, an enemy of the mass of the veterans, most of whom are on the relief rolls, "being supported," as he puts it, "without doing a stitch of work."

No real American who loves his fellow-countrymen better than he does the dollar would taunt the unemployed. He may be working himself, but he knows that he may lose his own job tomorrow. It is not the fault of the unemployed that we have unemployment, it is the fault of the wealthy employers who run the system.

I can assure this man who signs himself "Veteran" that there are scores of American Legion posts in this country where he would not dare stand up and repeat his vicious bankers' sneers at the unemployed. I believe the veterans would "tear him apart."

The K. K. K. began as a racket in rabid chauvinism. It conducted a hate campaign against Jews, Negroes and Irish Catholics. Then it began to fight labor unions, but its methods were so bloody and crude, and its leaders so disgustingly corrupt, that the organization collapsed.

Vestiges of it remain here and there. I investigated this K. K. K. letter, which attacks the unemployed, and the foreign-born, and discovered from Richard Sullivan, former secretary of the Unemployment Councils, that in Brownsville, a few years ago, there was a series of rent strikes which he led.

Many of the landlords were rich Jews. They were not

too patriotic about their own race, however, and must have hired the local K. K. K. to fight their striking Jewish tenants.

Cars loaded with shady characters would speed by the outdoor meetings and picket lines of the striking tenants and fling out threatening handbills like the letter I have received, signed by the K. K. K.

Did it break the strike? It did not; because it is doubtful if in this New York of Jews, Negroes and Irish it is healthy to wear a white bedsheet in daylight. The K. K. K. attained success only in communities where its members outnumbered their victims at least 1,000 to one.

So the Ku Klux Klan is "American." So "Americanism" means to starve the unemployed, and to sneer at the foreign-born who make up almost half the population of this country.

Well, it is a lie. America is better than the Ku Klux Klan. America is also the land of Thomas Jefferson, and Walt Whitman, and the abolitionists who fought a civil war to free this land from black slavery.

A better America than the Klan's lives in the hearts of millions of American workers and farmers and their intellectual allies, the young poets and scientists who have a vision for this land.

Hitler and Mussolini have made Ku Klux prisons out of their own unfortunate fatherlands. They have destroyed the labor unions, murdered and jailed thousands of the best minds, and plunged the unemployed into deeper poverty.

Capitalists love their country only for the profit they can get out of it; they love it, as Moishe Nadir has said, like cannibals.

True Americanism consists in fighting for the people of

America against the small minority that oppresses them. The K. K. K. "veteran" who sent me this letter is lined up with the exploiters against the people. We do not fear his profiteer bosses, so why should we fear him or his kind?

GERTRUDE STEIN: A LITERARY IDIOT

Gertrude Stein recently returned to America after an absence of many years. In Paris, where she lived as a forbidding priestess of a strange literary cult, Gertrude Stein accumulated a salon frequented by some of the outstanding names of the modern art world and acquired the reputation of a literary freak. People either gaped at her published writings, or laughed at her incomprehensible literary epigrams—"a rose is a rose is a rose."

She was looked upon by those who believed in her as the greatest revolutionist in the history of contemporary literature, and by those who scoffed as the perpetrator of a gigantic literary hoax.

As it happens, neither of the two opinions is wholly correct. Her "revolution" resembles a literary putsch, and if her writing is "a hoax" nevertheless she earnestly believes in it.

In essence, what Gertrude Stein's work represents is an example of the most extreme subjectivism of the contemporary bourgeois artist, and a reflection of the ideological anarchy into which the whole of bourgeois literature has fallen.

What was it that Gertrude Stein set out to do with literature? When one reads her work it appears to resemble

the monotonous gibberings of paranoiacs in the private wards of asylums. It appears to be a deliberate irrationality, a deliberate infantilism. However, the woman's not insane, but possessed of a strong, clear, shrewd mind. She was an excellent medical student, a brilliant psychologist, and in her more "popular" writings one sees evidence of wit and some wisdom.

And yet her works read like the literature of the students of padded cells in Matteawan.

Example: "I see the moon and the moon sees me. God bless the moon and God bless me and this you see remember me. In this way one fifth of the bananas were bought."

The above is supposed to be a description of how Gertrude Stein feels when she sees Matisse, the French modernist painter. It doesn't make sense. But this is precisely what it is supposed to do—not "make sense" in the normal meaning of the term.

The generation of artists of which Gertrude Stein is the most erratic figure arduously set out not to "make sense" in their literature. They believed that the instincts of man were superior to the reasonings of the rational mind. They believed in intuition as a higher form of learning and knowledge. Therefore, many of them wrote only about what they dreamed, dream literature. Others practised a kind of "automatic writing" where they would sit for hours scribbling the random, subconscious itchings of their souls. They abandoned themselves to the mystic irrationalities of their spirits in order to create works of art which would be expressions of the timeless soul of man, etc. The result unfortunately revealed their souls as astonishingly childish or imbecile.

The literary insanity of Gertrude Stein is a deliberate

insanity which arises out of a false conception of the nature of art and of the function of language.

A leisure class, which exists on the labor of others, which has no function to perform in society except the clipping of investment coupons, develops ills and neuroses. It suffers perpetually from boredom. Their life is stale to them. Tasteless, inane, because it has no meaning. They seek new sensations, new adventures constantly in order to give themselves feelings.

The same process took place with the artists of the leisure class. Literature also bored them. They tried to suck out of it new sensations, new adventures.

They destroyed the common use of language. Normal ways of using words bored them. They wished to use words in a new, sensational fashion. They twisted grammar, syntax. They went in for primitive emotions, primitive art. Blood, violent death, dope dreams, soul-writhings, became the themes of their works.

In Gertrude Stein, art became a personal pleasure, a private hobby, a vice. She did not care to communicate because essentially there was nothing to communicate. She had no responsibility except to her own inordinate cravings. She became the priestess of a cult with strange literary rites, with mystical secrets.

In this light, one can see that to Gertrude Stein and to the other artists like her, art exists in the vacuum of a private income. In order to pursue the kind of art, in order to be the kind of artist Gertrude Stein is, it is necessary to live in that kind of society which will permit one to have a private income from wealthy parents or sound investments. With this as a basis, you can write as you please. You can destroy language, mutilate grammar, rave or rant in the name of the higher knowledge. No-

body will disturb you. And in time perhaps you can impress or intimidate a certain number of critics and win a kind of reputation.

Gertrude Stein has won the reputation. She returns home to America after an absence of thirty-one years to find herself an object of curious respect by book clubs and lecture societies, and front page news for the newspapers.

Which seems to me to be proof that with enough money and enough persistence a madman can convince a world of his sanity. Gertrude Stein appears to have convinced America that she is a genius.

But Marxists refuse to be impressed with her own opinion of herself. They see in the work of Gertrude Stein extreme symptoms of the decay of capitalist culture. They view her work as the complete attempt to annihilate all relations between the artist and the society in which he lives. They see in her work the same kind of orgy and spiritual abandon that marks the life of the whole leisure class.

What else does her work resemble more than the midnight revels of a stockbroker throwing a pent-house party for a few intimate friends? Would it be possible to have either of these symptoms of degeneration except in a society divided into classes? Is there not an "idle art" just as there is an "idle rich"? Both do nothing but cultivate the insanity of their own desires, both cultivate strange indulgences. The literary idiocy of Gertrude Stein only reflects the madness of the whole system of capitalist values. It is part of the signs of doom that are written largely everywhere on the walls of bourgeois society.

MR. BOOLEY AND THE PIGEONS

Once upon a time there was a fat old Tammany grafter named Tim Booley. He was sly and never cared about anyone but himself. After some years he became the City Treasurer.

One day the King called Mr. Booley to the palace in Tammany Hall. The King's name was McTooley, and he was fatter and slyer than Mr. Booley.

"Tim," said the King, as he polished up the diamond crown a Wall Street ogre had given him. "Tim, I'm in trouble. An election is near. People think we ought to save money for the city. What do you suggest?"

That mean old man thought at once about the pigeons in Madison Square Park.

"Those pigeons are a nuisance, King," he said. "They dirty the sidewalks and office buildings. Nobody likes them, only the kids, old ladies and bums. But none of these people vote."

"I'm glad to hear that," said the King gravely. "Votes is votes."

"King, it takes a street cleaner several hours to clean up after the darned pigeons," Mr. Booley continued. "It costs the city $1.59 a week. We can save all this money by driving the pigeons away."

King McTooley seeing it would cost him neither votes nor graft, said that it should be done. So next day the treasurer ordered a hundred cops to drive the pigeons out of the park.

Life became pretty tough for the poor pigeons. As soon as a kid or an old lady threw them some cracked corn, a cop rushed up swinging his big club.

The pigeons grew thinner and thinner. It was worse

than the depression for them. They began to worry. They hated Mr. Booley's fat guts, and held a conference to see what they could do.

Some of the youngsters wanted to fly to some other city. But the older ones told them every city had its Tammany. Other pigeons suggested that they gang up on Mr. Booley some morning, when he stepped out of his limousine.

Finally, a quiet old lady pigeon suggested that the birds ask Saint Francis to help them.

"Nah, that's useless!" broke in a smart young pigeon who lived in the cornices of the Public Library, and read books.

"Do you think these Tammany grafters believe in him now? Not a chance. When nobody believes in a person he loses his magic power. We'd better go to Lenin. People really believe in Lenin nowadays."

So the birds voted to call on Lenin to save them.

Comrade Lenin was very busy in a cafeteria strike uptown. But he wasn't too busy to listen to the delegates of the pigeons.

"Yes," he smiled kindly, when he heard their troubles, "I'll be glad to help you against Mr. Booley."

That night a ragged old man, a jobless carpenter, stopped Mr. Booley while he was airing his wife on Park Avenue.

"Scram!" growled Mr. Booley. "I've no time for bums! Can't you see I'm a treasurer?"

The old carpenter had strange, magic eyes. He looked right through Mr. Booley, and frightened him. Mr. Booley had never met anyone with honest eyes.

"I'm not a bum, and I'm not asking you for a nickel,"

said the old carpenter, quietly. "All I ask of you is to be kind to the pigeons."

"Gosh darn those dirty old pigeons!" Mr. Booley snarled. "Gerrahere, or I'll call my police force!"

He pulled out his police whistle, which he always carried around his neck, like a Tammany charm.

The old carpenter, who was really Lenin in disguise, was not frightened. He still looked Mr. Booley square in the eye.

"I warn you once, I warn you twice," said Lenin sternly. "By tomorrow morning you must stop chasing my friends, the pigeons."

Mr. Booley blew his whistle angrily. A hundred cops appeared at once. Park Avenue was filled with blustering, red-faced cops, swinging their clubs and howling for blood.

But Lenin had vanished like a cloud.

Next morning the sun shone, and Mr. Booley felt better. In the office the Chief of Police brought his weekly report to Mr. Booley. Sixty more pigeons had died of hunger. Mr. Booley rubbed his hands with delight.

"That's fine, Chief," he chortled. "Keep it up."

But the moment the Chief had left the office, Mr. Booley felt a sharp pain in his stomach.

"I musta ate too many clams last night," he moaned. "It's my indigestion again!"

But what was this? Why was he getting smaller and smaller? All his fat belly was rolling away. Clams had never done this before to Mr. Booley.

And his fine clothes vanished, and he was naked. All his expensive jewelry flew away, and his high white collar. Now his bankbook disappeared, and all his chins. And

horrors! feathers had begun to sprout on his body, and his hands turned into wings!

Frantically, he tried to blow his police whistle for help. It was too late. The whistle had also vanished, and Mr. Booley had become a little blue and green pigeon with round pink eyes!

Really, he was handsomer than he had ever been before, but Mr. Booley was terribly scared and sad. He didn't want to be a beautiful pigeon; he wanted to remain a fat, mean old Tammany grafter.

He started to cry like a baby, and flew to the desk of Gladys, his faithful secretary.

"Please call the cops! Call the Commissioner of Health, Gladys!" he yelled. "I've been doped! I've been robbed! I've been framed!" But all Gladys could hear was a pigeon's tweet, tweet, tweet!

Mr. Booley was the most flabbergasted droop-winged pigeon you ever saw. He didn't know what to do next. He hung around City Hall for hours trying to make Tammany grafters who passed in and out understand that he was Mr. Booley, their old pal.

But they snarled and shooed him away with their derby hats. They didn't like pigeons; pigeons had no votes. The sun went down, and it was cold.

Next morning he was hungry. He remembered Madison Square Park, and flew there. People were still feeding the pigeons, despite the cops. And for once, Mr. Booley was glad of it.

He saw a nice old lady throwing some cracked corn on the grass. Mr. Booley was ashamed at first to do it, but he really was so hungry that he made a dash for the corn.

The other pigeons, of course, recognized him at once. They laughed and jeered at their old enemy, Mr. Booley.

"Look at the wise guy now!" they said. They haw-hawed and pushed him around. One of the youngsters even took a smack at him.

And now Mr. Booley is an outcast. He has to fight like a jobless man for his every scrap of food. The cops have gone since Mr. Booley stopped being treasurer. There is plenty of corn now for the pigeons. But they keep pushing Mr. Booley around. They aren't kind to a dumb Tammany treasurer.

ANGELO HERNDON GOES TO THE CHAIN GANG

Angelo Herndon went back to Georgia and gave himself up to serve twenty years on a chain gang. This 21-year-old Negro boy was convicted of the terrific crime of having a dark skin and asking for bread for the hungry unemployed. Out on bail for over a year, Angelo Herndon toured the United States, and spoke to more than a million people.

No doubt of it, this Angelo Herndon, a boy in years, son of a Negro miner, is cut of the same pattern as all the great historic heroes of the people.

You know it when you hear and see him. It is not just courage, but a form of genius made up in equal parts of brain, heart and soul. Many people have courage; but not enough have this persistent courage, this vision of the future, this flame that never dies down, as it does in so many of us.

In other words, most of us can show courage in spurts and flashes; but a genius like Herndon or Garibaldi or

John Brown or Lenin lives in an atmosphere of courage and faith like an eagle among its native mountains.

Before he went to give himself up to serve his twenty chain-gang years, Angelo handed Joe North of the *New Masses* the following statement:

"If what I've done and what I do, if all that I have suffered, and will still suffer, helps build up the united front, then I have been successful. My fight has not been in vain. I will have been as successful as any human being, any worker, could be, in such a short span of life. I am now twenty-one years of age.

"If life is spared me, and I am sure the people of America will see to that, if I am snatched from this slow death of a Georgia chain-gang, then I will devote the rest of my life to the same work that caused my arrest.

"I searched for a unity of all the working men in America, white and black, in mine and office, to end the slavery I find my beautiful country in. I want to see shining workers' homes of marble where today these grimy shacks stand."

Beautiful words for a man in peril of his life! Brave words coming deep from the heart of a suppressed class! The Negro people of the south—deprived of schools, starved and lynched into the lowest wages, living in filthy old shacks, the lowest of the low in America, despised and looked down upon—yes, all this, but not crushed, not dehumanized, for they have developed an Angelo Herndon!

Joe North reports Angelo's last night of freedom in Atlanta. They stopped at the home of friends in the Negro neighborhood.

"Talk about the hovels and mudstreets of Aduwa and Adigrat. . . . In the second biggest city of the south, the homes leaned on rickety brick piles, the night stars shone

through cracks in the frame structures. And the people were hungry."

They crowded around Angelo. "Well, I'll be blessed! Angelo, Angelo Herndon!" They kissed him, and they made him at home. The family was on relief, but father and mother went out and rustled up food, some garfish and potatoes, and even a little wine for their Angelo, who was going to prison in the morning to serve twenty years.

A dark shack—no gas—only a lamp in the kitchen. They got some old phonograph records and played them for Angelo, mostly blues—the Back Water blues, the Deadcat blues, the Mean Woman blues. They joked and laughed, but not too loud—cops in cars patrol these streets constantly; Atlanta and most southern cities live constantly under a kind of martial law.

But Angelo sang, too. He was laughing with all the rest, and he sang that song he'd learned the last time in the jail.

"Look a-yonder—yonder
Hard-boiled sun is turnin' over
It's comin' down, O Lawd
It's comin' down.

Gimme a cool drink of water
Before I die, O Lawd.
Every mail day I get a letter
Son, come home, O son, son, come home!

How can I go
Shot guns and pistols all around me
To blow me down, O Lawd
To blow me down."

The next morning at 6:30 the host and hostess left to go to work on their relief jobs. They wanted to do a last good thing for Angelo, but what? They wanted to give him something, but what, when you're flat broke?

He saw a family picture on the mantel. "I'd like to have that picture," he said, "autographed."

"Auto-what?" they asked.

"Autographed. That means, sign it," he said. They took the photograph down (the mother and child on a chair, and the father in high celluloid collar standing stiffly beside them), and they painfully wrote their names down.

Angelo took their picture and looked at it intently. His people, his fellow-workingmen. "I'll carry that along to Fulton Tower," he said smiling.

"We all shook hands," Joe North continues, "and they kissed Angelo Herndon and they went away to work on relief.

"Angelo and I played a few more records and then Angelo said we ought to wash the breakfast dishes before we left and we did it and about noon Angelo went down to the Atlanta courthouse and gave himself up.

" 'You know,' he said to me a block or two away, 'the nearer I get to the court the nearer I feel freedom. I'm dead sure the united front'll get me out soon. Funny isn't it?' He was silent, a moment, and then grinned. 'That's dialectics, I guess, isn't it?' "

Yes, it's dialectics, for the thought of Angelo Herndon on a chain gang will rouse every one who has known him to tireless effort to free this remarkable, great-hearted youth, just as the months spent by John Brown in prison roused millions of northerners to his defense, and made them partisans against slavery.

NEW ESCAPES FROM THE SOVIETS

One feels a little silly posing as a Paul Revere; and yet, ladies of the D.A.R., it is necessary to warn you that the Redcoats have again arrived to ravage our coasts. They have captured the *Saturday Evening Post.* Yes, I mean the magazine published by George Horace Lorimer in Philadelphia. Examine the issue of April 11, 1936, and you will find a story, titled "Escape From the Mine," by Walter D. Edmonds. In this story the hero is a Tory and the villains are your saintly ancestors, the founding fathers.

It is a worse horror story than Tatiana's *Escape from the Soviets,* though strangely resembling that famous fiction of today. Sixty feet underground, in an old abandoned mine where water drips down the rock and forms in scummy pools, the revolutionary barbarians have flung a group of "innocent" Tories. Most of these Tories were poor men, says the author, arrested not for any overt act, but because of the widespread fear under which the republic had been placed by dictators like George Washington.

One prisoner was a minister who had merely "preached for the maintenance of established government and deplored the action of such hotheaded people as General Washington."

Another man was a New York farmer "who had tried to protect his wife and daughter from being molested by New England militia," revolutionary ruffians and rapists, undoubtedly. John Wolff, hero of the tale, had done nothing worse than to give food to some hungry "refugee loyalists."

The guards hate these prisoners, feed them nothing and delight to curse and taunt them. Once a founding father of a prison guard got drunk and opened the trap door to fire his musket again and again into the prisoners. He killed one man, and had the others flogged mercilessly. One prisoner was hung by his heels for an hour and a half by brutal "Bolshevik" soldiers of George Washington.

The hero finally escapes the madhouse and after incredible hardship, makes his way to Canada and freedom. But here he learns that his little country store has been burned down by the rebels and his wife probably raped and kidnaped. So he joins a band of outraged Tories being organized to fight the rebels.

Ladies, I want to warn you that this is a skilfully written piece of propaganda, worthy of the White Guard emigré of today. It makes one's blood boil against the followers of George Washington. Several million clerks, bond salesmen, rubber-goods merchants and Liberty League magnates read the *Saturday Evening Post*. Such writing, if continued, may inflame them to the point of an armed plot to return the United States to Edward VIII. What will happen to you then, O stately Daughters of the American Revolution? These *S.E.P.* Tories will surely have your gore, for, ladies, you have made yourselves notorious as agitators and "patriots."

Now it is true that many brutalities were visited upon the Tories by the desperate and ragged patriots of 1776. This was in the first and more chaotic period of the revolution, before the various state governments had been organized to administer formal justice. But Mr. Edmonds does not give all the reasons why the Tories were persecuted by an alarmed population. Was not every Tory a scab, a spy and a potential armed enemy of the weak

young Republic? If scabs and Tories multiply and are not choked, the strike or the revolution is soon lost. The patriots, however crudely, did what needed to be done to establish a republic.

But why, at this late date, must one argue all over again the justice or validity of the American Revolution of 1776? A revolution is indivisible; you cannot have its fruits unless you also accept its discomforts and difficulties. Americans generally have been proud of the revolution that permitted the Eagle to spread its wings from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Does George Horace Lorimer choose this moment to vilify George Washington because he fears that a new revolution is in the air and it is necessary to slander every variety of revolution, even a bourgeois one like the uprising of '76?

Such distortion of the nation's history has long been a tactic of the fascist-royalists of France. For several generations they have been writing books and fiery manifestoes in which Danton is named a common thief, Robespierre a pathological murderer and the great French Revolution of 1789 a plot by a few thousand pirates against the true interests of the nation. For them the revolution is a gigantic crime that must be rectified.

They delight in uncovering all the petty filth that accompanies any great movement of the masses and using it as an argument against democracy.

But this is a new tactic for the United States. In the past few years, for example, we have had a number of books written by serious intellectuals to glorify the southern case for Negro slavery. *So Red the Rose*, by that self-conscious "aristocrat" and admirer of Mussolini, Stark Young, is a popular example of this new yearning

for a return to feudalism. *I'll Take My Stand,* a symposium by a group of Southern intellectuals, is another.

The Negro slaves were satisfied with their happy lot; abolitionists were crude Bolshevik fanatics; southern slave-owners were gentle, courtly men who, until interrupted by the Civil War, had developed the only culture this country has ever known; John Brown was a mercenary horse-thief who raided Harper's Ferry to take a little more spoil; the reconstruction period was a time of Negro vandalism and brutality, for which the Ku Klux Klan was a noble and heroic remedy; the North was wrong, the South was right and the slaves should never have been freed—these are the myths the neo-feudalists preach.

The new viewpoint has even invaded Hollywood and been sent forth again to corrupt millions of young American minds, via such pictures as the recent *Prisoner of Shark Island.* This story has much the same outline as the story in the *Saturday Evening Post;* a kindly Southerner is arrested on a baseless charge by frenzied Northern fanatics and persecuted with an incredible ferocity (the same old pattern again, you will note, as our modern *Escape from the Soviets*).

Yes, King George should have won over the American revolutionists; and Simon Legree should have conquered the emancipators of Uncle Tom. Such is the historic viewpoint these intellectuals of an emerging American fascism are now spreading, by means not even subtle.

It is true that another group of fascists like Hearst use the sacred names of Jefferson and Lincoln as a cover for their own anti-democratic maneuvers.

This latter form of demagogy will probably prove the

more favored among the American fascists, since it appeals more to the democratic instincts of the masses.

Whichever tactic is used, we ought never to allow fascists the right to distort the history of the American people. The fight for the national tradition is one of the major battlefields in our war against a world of Hitlers and Mussolinis. America was built by the people and belongs to the people; and to hell with King George and all slave-owners, past and present! Wake up, Daughters of the American Revolution! The Hessian is at our gates!

THE MIDDLE CLASS AND WAR

MANY of my generation, surely, will remember as vividly as I do a certain *New Republic* editorial which appeared soon after Woodrow Wilson had declared war on Germany. It was titled, "Who Willed the War?" and if the Museum of Capitalist Decadence is still functioning at Commonwealth College in Arkansas, I would recommend that they post this famous editorial in a conspicuous place in their Chamber of Intellectual Horrors.

Today a great many respectable Americans know and say openly that it was J. P. Morgan and other bankers who willed America's entry into the first world war. In 1917, however, only working-class Socialists, anarchists and I.W.W. were keen and bold enough to say this. Twenty years in Leavenworth was the reward usually received from the government for such untimely brilliance. The official theory then was that the American people had willed the war.

But the *New Republic* group of liberal intellectuals, led

by Walter Lippmann, then a suave young Harvard genius just embarking upon his remarkable career of opportunism, differed both with the Department of Justice theorists and the Marxians as to who had willed the war.

Soon after war was declared, and at a moment when all the pacifist and working-class anti-war groups were plunged in gloom and confusion, that famous *New Republic* editorial appeared. It was lyric in tone, a paean of triumph; a long, collective editorial that leaped joyously around the inspiring conflagration of a world war. It crowed and sniggered, it was drunk with excitement, this manifesto of our best liberal minds; and it shocked the rest of us as much as if a respected grandmother were suddenly to turn public prostitute.

For the *New Republic* group, reflecting as they did the mind of thousands of college professors, businessmen, lawyers and other middle-class people, did not regard America's entrance into the war as a calamity, but as a glorious victory for justice and liberalism.

More than that; they esteemed it as a victory for their own liberal group, a demonstration that liberals ruled the nation. It was not the bankers who had willed the war, they said, nor had the American people willed it. No, they exulted fiercely, it was the small and chosen minority of *liberal intellectuals* who had willed the war!

Looking back more calmly at the period and trying to understand it without nausea and contempt, one sees that within certain limits, the *New Republic* was right. Capitalist interests cannot carry on a war, any more than they can set up a fascist regime, without first finding a mass base. Their fertile soil seems to be somewhere in the middle class, in war as in fascism and for much the same causes. But how can they win these middle-class masses?

Bankers, as is notorious, have no brains out of their counting-houses. Furthermore, they are universally distrusted and must work under the rose. They need demagogues, ideologists, press agents to be their front-men. And they find these in sufficient plenty among the intellectuals, sad to state; since certain intellectuals know the democratic shibboleths that win the mass and are therefore more effective than a conservative intellectual.

So one finds that "great" liberal, George Creel, heading America's propaganda bureau, with a large staff of certain intellectuals, including Ernest Poole, Norman Matson and others (they prided themselves on carrying Socialist cards and boring from within). It was these noble souls who spread the horrible atrocity lies that whipped up the war and lynch spirit of the American people. They entered government bureaus in Washington by the hundreds and wrote articles hailing the control by government over war materials as a step to socialism, much as Mussolini is now calling his own war preparations a form of socialism.

Yes, the liberal intellectuals flocked to war-time Washington enthusiastically, just as they did in the early days of the N.R.A.; there was much the same atmosphere of goofy optimism and opportunistic rationalization. And they succeeded in selling the war to the middle class.

These "liberal" intellectuals proved to be the bellwethers who led the lower middle class into the war. Some of them even suffered delusions of grandeur and believed that they had "willed the war." One can grow indignant about them, and it is true that they were and are a peculiarly venal, cowardly and will-less lot, of whom Randolph Bourne wrote a sufficient epitaph.

What I should like to examine for the moment, how-

ever, are the conditions that make some middle-class people so susceptible to war-mongering by the trained-seal intellectuals. It is a universal phenomenon that can be observed in every land. The most striking example in recent history was seen in the early days of the Russian Revolution, in the bourgeois phase of Miliukov and Kerensky. During this period the Russian people were split into two camps; the capitalists, on one hand, were grouped in a strange united front with certain liberals and reformist Socialists, to demand that Russia go on with the imperialist war. On the other side were the workers and peasants, headed by the Bolsheviks, who had fought the war from its beginning.

The capitalists and bankers would obviously have profited if Russia could have seized Constantinople and a sea-lane to Europe for trading and empire, but what could the liberal intellectuals have gained? Yet some among them shrieked at Lenin as a German spy and flocked into the White Guard armies to fight workers and peasants who refused to go on with the unholy war.

In an exchange of letters with Sigmund Freud on the causes of war, Albert Einstein said, among other things:

> "Is it possible to control man's mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness? Here I am thinking by no means only of the so-called uncultured masses. Experience shows that it is rather the so-called 'intelligentsia' that is most apt to yield to these disastrous collective suggestions, since the intellectual has no contact with life in the raw, but encounters it in its easiest, synthetic form—upon the printed page."

Professor Einstein, like many worthy pacifists, here makes the mistake of regarding war as due only to psychological forces—as an animal atavism in human nature. No doubt this is an important factor in the conduct of wars, once they have been started by those who profit by them. But why do these same "atavistic" middle-class intelligentsia shudder so much at the "horror" of a revolution and rush so eagerly into a world war?

I think the answer is, that the lower middle class is led by the bell-wether demagogues to expect many advantages to itself from a war and none from a revolution.

In the first honeymoon stages of the war sections of the middle class are enthusiastic. Some of their sons fill the officer camps and savor the sweet illusion of power over the anonymous mass of working-class privates. There is always, too, a business boom during this period; prices rise, little factories are commandeered and earn enormous profits, all kinds of government jobs are opened to the middle-class jobless.

Finance capital needs the lower middle class badly during a war, as during the establishment of a fascist regime, and it throws many a sop, both oratorical and real, to this large and important group.

But it is after the war that the piper must be paid and that the middle class wakes up to find that far from "making the world safe for democracy," or "making England a land fit for heroes to live in," it has ruined itself.

The late world war resulted in an inflation in Germany that wiped out the lower middle class there as effectively as if French bombers had erased their cities. A world depression followed that created, in England, millions of the so-called "new poor," middle-class people robbed by finance capital of their savings and incomes. France, too,

has felt the crisis; and Italy, Japan and America. What did our own lower middle class finally gain from our entry into the war? A soldier's bonus for some and a place on the relief rolls for most. Not even an unsuccessful revolution in America would have lowered the living standard of the lower middle class as did the late war.

Will things be as easy for the Wall Street bell-wethers as in the last crusade? No, I believe, for millions of lower middle-class people have become proletarianized during the present crisis. They have become as cynical as most exploited workers have generally been about upper-class chauvinist rhetoric. A starving man doesn't leap to arms when a Wall Street bugler tells him to make the world safe for democracy. Instead, he is apt to growl, "Why in hell haven't you first made the world safe for me and my kind?"

Living in this inferno of unemployment, a deadly, gray, unheroic world of torture that kills as surely as any war, the American lower middle class is beginning to lose its fear of revolution. They know it is better than what is happening today in millions of American farms and tenement houses. Many of these people have lost all illusion of ever again making a bourgeois "career" for themselves. Even in such middle-class movements as the Townsend old-age plan, the Epic and Utopian movements, one finds a revolutionary-minded distrust of Wall Street and its government. No, the Walter Lippmanns will not find it so easy to "will" another war for this new American people, scarified and reforged as they are in the hellish flames of the crisis.

A people's revolution is the logical answer to the small clique of war-makers and fascists. But the lower middle class formerly feared such a revolution and this fear, dis-

proved by the developments in the Soviet Union, has been the nose-ring by which this great class has been led by its financial masters into the horror of war and fascism.

Since the middle class has nothing to gain by another Wall Street war except new crises of inflation, hunger and unemployment, it should learn to pick and fight its own wars. And it is learning and it will amaze the Morgans and Lippmanns some day, sooner or later.

A NIGHT IN THE MILLION DOLLAR SLUMS

When this "drama critic" was a boy growing up on the East Side, he usually spent his Friday night in the gallery of one of two disreputable burlesque houses, Miner's or the London Theatre, both on the Bowery.

Other nights, after sweating through a ten, twelve and even fourteen hour day for the Adams Express Company, juggling 1,000-pound crates of machinery and the like, the author's Guardian Angel might have discovered him (had that derby-hatted, slimy-winged, double-crossing, racketeering heeler of a Tammany God ever cared) in the dirty cellar gymnasium of a Catholic church.

With his gang of seventeen-year-old savages, here the future critic boxed, wrestled and otherwise received his "lumps." It was that period of adolescence when a healthy boy is infatuated with his own muscles and body. Your critic, during those formative years, had no higher prayer than to grow up into as good a scrapper as clean little Frankie Burns, later to become a lightweight champion,

but who then labored in the same branch of the Adams Express as our hero.

Our author, little knowing the literary fate before him, had also no use for books. He hadn't read one since graduating from the same public school as Gyp the Blood, a gunman of yesteryear. The author laid the foundations of his culture by studying the sporting pages, and as a faithful weekly worshipper of the chorus line in the burlesque houses aforenamed.

The admission to the gallery of these theatres was ten cents. There were no seats, only tiers of splintery wooden steps to sit on. One went with one's gang, because there was always sure to be some serious fighting. The squads of gallery bouncers earned their pay; for the roughneck audience always made it a point of honor to see how much one could get away with. They yelled insults at singers and dancers who did not please them ("You stink!" was a favorite critical epithet); they threw beer bottles or took a punch at neighbors who had offended them by daring to exist in the same world.

After the show the boys often drank a great many beers, and some continued their education by visiting one of the numerous Tammany temples of feminine physiology where the admission was fifty cents. Well, it was all sordid, physical, brutalizing, but it was all we knew, and there was some fun and vitality in it, anyway. At least it did not pretend to be anything it wasn't; and no chattering slummers like Gilbert Seldes as yet had come from Harvard, and Santayana, and Matisse and Gertrude Stein, to discover this gutter life, and deepen its degradation by that foulest of all bourgeois degeneracies, the aesthete's delight in the "picturesque" side of mass poverty.

With these introductory remarks I will confess to hav-

ing attended recently a performance of the Ziegfeld Follies. The intellectual drama critics of New York have surrounded these shows with a great deal of glamor; they write of such Broadway spectacles with high aesthetic seriousness: it is obviously a drama critic's duty to appraise these revues; and for the sake of the *New Masses*, I went to one.

Report: There was an underwater ballet, à la poor dead Pavlova, with a sweaty baritone singing a sentimental ballad on a bridge. The fake waves shivered, and there was pseudo-Egyptian music. Then a young Broadway imitation of a man, a hoofer with patent-leather hair, hoofed it with a good-looking chorine and sang a fake love ballad, with a refrain something like this: "I Like the Likes of You." The chorus came on; fifty athletic girls in silver hats and gold pants. They danced and sang something. Another hoofer danced a few variations on the old buck-and-wing, that only a Negro boy knows how to dance; all others are bleached and tasteless imitations of the real thing. A satire on the country "tryout" theatres so numerous last summer, the chief humor being about the fact that the farmer sells both tickets and eggs; also some cracks about a nudist colony, and the key to the outhouse.

One good line: "This is a society play, no belching here, just rape and adultery."

Climax: "I want you to meet my husband": and the heroine lifts a window and reveals the rear end of a horse.

Song: A tall drugstore blonde in white rayon decorated with a large gold cross sings a sob song about "suddenly" being a stranger to the man she loves, and fifty good-looking broads in gold and silver and platinum

dresses suddenly dance on and sing and dance the same song, "Suddenly."

Another sappy love duet by another patent-leather hair hoofer and girl; then another big blonde beauty with a hard face comes on and struts around exhibiting *her* rear end. A brisk young Englishman delivers a monologue, in the old stammer style; a few good lines: "America as a nation is too laxative"; "While one is keeping the wolf from the door, the stork flies in"; "Yes, you are a great nation, you have built yourself up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty"; and there was a Barber College Glee Club, which sang a really funny oratorio, pretentious and solemn, on the theme of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf." During this, the chief comedian kept looking down into the beefy breasts of one of the lady singers, weighing them with his hands, etc. (Laughter, applause.)

The chorus appears, dressed in another variation of gold and silver; some humor about homosexuals in a Greenwich Village scene; five more repetitions of the stale young love and hoofing duet; a skit about George Washington and the cherry tree; the reviewing stand of a New York parade, with a trace of satire: "It was seven lawyers who covered Wiggin"; then that good old clown Fanny Brice as the Countess Olga sings sadly about her lost grandeur in Russia, and now she has been reduced to doing a nude fan dance in Minsky's burlesque show; then a false sentimental pacifist song, "You got sunshine, you got life, why must you fight and die?" etc.; and a male dancer in a gold trench helmet and gold tights waving a gold flag at the climax; more chorus girls in tinsel, silver and gold, again and again, trotting on and off.

"You're so lovable, you're so kissable, your beauty is

unbeatable, to me it's unbelievable," they sang, and a chorus boy dressed in gold satin and lace of a priest married them in front of Franklin Simon's upper-class department store, and there was a Maxfield Parrish art tableau to follow, and the tall, mean, slouchy blonde truthfully sang to the audience:

"You're still seduced
By marcel waves
And not by
Marcel Proust."

In the audience one sees all the big sellers and buyers of New York and the Tammany lawyers and Yale-Harvard boys and their enameled sweethearts; and business Napoleons with severe horse-faced wives from the suburbs; *Saturday Evening Post* writers (in the chips), stock brokers, politicians, clothing bosses, hotel owners, sheriffs, on visits from Georgia and Montana; race track bookies; high powered steel salesmen and shoelace promoters; white shirt fronts, evening gowns; cold, beautiful, empty faces, vivacious dumb faces; hard empty male faces, senile old rounder faces; young sleek worthless faces; the faces of those who "succeed" in New York—New York, to which all the successful exploiters and parasites of America come once a year to see the Follies.

This is the peak of their art and culture. The show I saw was no better or worse than all the other shows of its kind. In fact, it was the same show with a few variations. It was the same show, more or less, that I once saw as a boy for ten cents on the Bowery; and many of the jokes had not even been changed for this audience, though some of them paid $6.60 for their seats.

On the Bowery we had access to nothing better; but these people had every door to life open and could have made a deliberate choice. And this was their choice, this brainless, soulless parade of sterility. This was what they wanted, and it was given them. It was beautiful in its overlavishness, its vulgar parvenu attempt at gold and silver luxury. In this glittering temple a smelly corpse was being worshipped. The audience did not believe in its own laughter; the actors in their own performance. It all meant nothing. It did not amuse. It was inhuman as any robot. Its satire was that of the coward avoiding any politically dangerous theme; its sensuality that of the courtesan; false love, false music, false golden glamor.

This bourgeois form of art for art's sake is no longer worthy of one's comment or attack. It has only one useful purpose that I can still see: it numbs the minds of the exploiters. Let them continue to support it and be stultified. But I hope they raise the pay of the chorus girls, who, poor kids, are as skillful, disciplined, and overworked as the men on Ford's conveyor belt.

THE GUN IS LOADED, DREISER!

A CHILD finds a loaded gun and thinks it a fine toy. He points it at his brother playfully and pulls the trigger. The gun goes off and kills the brother. The child does not comprehend what he has done; bewildered, he stares at the silent little corpse of his brother, and runs off to some less puzzling game.

How can we punish a child for such a crime? We do

not punish him; he is not responsible. But a grown man we must consider responsible for all his actions.

Recently, Theodore Dreiser stumbled in some manner upon the Jewish problem. Almost playfully, without any real study of this blood-stained question, he arranged a symposium with his fellow-editors on that rather trivial journal, the *American Spectator*. It was a symposium, according to their own account, "with the accompaniment of wine." Eugene O'Neill, James Branch Cabell, Ernest Boyd, and that example of all the vulgar froth in the Jewish bourgeois mind, George Jean Nathan, were among those who drank the wine and indulged themselves in the planned, self-conscious wit.

The tone was one of sophisticated banter. All seemed to agree with Dreiser, even the very clever Jew present, that the Jews as a race were too clever for the Gentiles to live with. The Jews must be put on an intellectual quota of some sort. If they refused to practise intellectual birth-control, the Gentiles would be justified in asking these clever and dangerous guests to depart to some country of their own.

The Hitlerish symposium was noticed for what it was in a few journals, including the *Daily Worker*. The liberal Hutchins Hapgood wrote an indignant letter of protest to the *American Spectator*. That gallant and airy paper edited by grown men, one of them even noted for his beard, assumed the child's prerogative of irresponsibility, and simply refused to print it. But Mr. Dreiser replied privately to Mr. Hapgood. The latter wrote a second note, and Dreiser made another reply.

Recently, in the *Nation*, a year after the event, the letters have been printed with the permission of Theodore Dreiser. They have aroused a small storm of shocked in-

dignation. Theodore Dreiser had come to be regarded in our country as our outstanding symbol of the literary artist who brings his genius to the aid of the oppressed. Like Romain Rolland in France, or Maxim Gorky in Russia, here was a writer who had become, in the fine words of Zola, the conscience of his land. Twenty years ago Dreiser was already writing essays of protest and rebellion in the socialist and anarchist press. His fiction has always been deeply laden with the compassion and brooding tenderness of a man who feels in his own spirit the wounds of the humiliated mass. Dreiser went to the aid of the Kentucky miners. He aided other groups of persecuted workers. He wrote a book of straightforward condemnation of capitalism. He defended the Soviet Union, and even called himself by the proud name of Communist.

Was this the man who was now repeating so airily many of the familiar slogans of the *Judenfressers* Hitler and Streicher? It was unthinkable; if true, it was an American tragedy, infinitely worse than that which befell Clyde Griffiths.

To Mr. Dreiser all this hullabaloo about his letters seemed almost humorous. After all, he had expressed only his private opinion, and was he not entitled to that? He was not an anti-Semite, but a friend of the Jews. In advising them to form their own country he was helping them. But he was still a "Communist," and what did this Jewish question have to do with Communism?

The simplest and most basic discovery made by Marx is that there are no indivisible races or nations, but that all the races and nations are split sharply by the war of two classes, the war of owners against workers.

This war can be detected as easily among the Jews as

among the British, the Germans or the Japanese. It rages most strongly on Mr. Dreiser's very doorstep in New York, and it is a marvel that he has never noticed it.

New York is the center of the clothing industry of America. The industry is controlled by Jewish capitalists, and almost a quarter of a million Jewish workers are exploited by them in their factories and shops.

"They (the Jews) do not, in spite of all discussion of the matter, enter upon farming; they are rarely mechanics; they are not the day laborers of the world—pick and shovel; they are by preference lawyers, bankers, merchants, money-lenders and brokers, and middlemen," says Mr. Dreiser. "If you listen to Jews discuss Jews, you will find that they are very money-minded, very pagan, very sharp in practice, and usually, insofar as the rest is concerned, they have the single objective of plenty of money."

Yes, this is true of the bourgeois Jews. They are sharp in practice and money-minded, like the rest of their class, Jewish and Gentile. Mr. Dreiser says he has been fleeced by these Jewish associates of his, cheated by these crooked publishers and lawyers.

But does he think these Jewish exploiters are more tender in their mercies to their fellow-Jews who happen to be of the working class? Hasn't Mr. Dreiser ever seen any of the fierce and bloody strikes in the clothing industry of New York? They have been raging for more than thirty years. Jewish bosses hire gangsters to slug and kill their Jewish workers. They even hire Irish and Italian gangsters, they can never get enough Irish policemen to break the skulls of their "brothers."

Neither were the American nationalists, Anglo-Saxon and proud of their pioneer stock, who own the coal mines

in Kentucky, any more backward in killing and starving their blood-brothers, the Kentucky miners. This you did see, Mr. Dreiser. It is capitalism. Would you say of the Kentucky miners that since they are also Anglo-Saxon like the mine-owners, "they have the same single objective of plenty of money"? But you say it of these Jewish workers all over the world, who are as much the victims of the capitalist Jews as you think yourself to be.

I must confess that whenever I hear anyone glibly repeating this old vulgar lie of anti-Semitism, "all the Jews are rich, all the Jews are money-minded," it makes me want to howl like a dog with rage and fight.

Shame on those who insult the poor! More shame to you, Mr. Dreiser, born in poverty, and knowing its bitter humiliations! Don't you know, can't you understand that the Jews are a race of paupers? You ramble around with your George Jean Nathans and your slick Jewish lawyers and bankers, and think this is the Jewish race.

Ten years ago or more I took you around on a tour of the East Side. You were gathering material for your sensitive and compassionate play about Jews, *The Hand of the Potter*. What did you see on the East Side, Mr. Dreiser? Do you remember the block of tenements I pointed out to you, famous among social workers as having the highest rate of tuberculosis per square foot of any area in the world? Do you remember the ragged children without playgrounds who darted among the street cars and autos? Do you remember the dark, stinking hallways, the hot congested ant-life, the penny grocery stores?

This was only one Jewish ghetto. All over the world the mass of Jews live in such hell-holes of poverty, and have been living in them for centuries. The ghetto has been the historic home of the Jewish race, and the ghetto

is not picturesque, I can assure you; it is bedbugs, hunger, filth, tears, sickness, poverty!

Yiddish literature and music are pervaded like the Negro spirituals with all the hopeless melancholy of ghetto poverty. This is our tradition. How do you account for the fact that so many young Jews may be found in the radical movements of all the lands? It is because they have known the horror of poverty, and have determined to revolt and die, if need be, rather than suffer such a fate. And the first spiritual operation a young Jew must perform on himself, if he is to become a fighter, is to weed out the ghetto melancholy, defeatism and despair that centuries of poverty have instilled in his blood.

The majority of Jews, like the mass of every other race, are workers and paupers. You do not believe in statistics, but as a "Communist" you should have learned this basic truth from Marx and Lenin, and it would have saved you from this cruel taunt.

As for the rich Jews, the exploiting Jews who are your friends, Jewish poverty has never disturbed them. Many of them live off it. Many of them, bankers and industrialists, are even complacent under anti-Semitism. As long as capitalism endures, they will endure. Many of them helped Hitler in Germany with funds and advice, and still are at ease in their Nazi capitalist Zion.

There is a residue of truth, however, in Theodore Dreiser's complaint (it is Hitler's also) that too large a proportion of Jews are shopkeepers, professionals, and middlemen, "luftmenschen," as they are named in Yiddish, and compete with the Gentile parasites. There is a historic reason for this in the centuries of Europe when Jews could not own or farm land, or engage in any form of skilled labor (this is coming again in Germany).

Historic reasons, however, do not heal a political danger. What is needed is a change. Even among the bourgeois Jewish nationalists the brand of the "luftmensch" has become hateful. The Zionists know they cannot attempt to build Palestine with lawyers and storekeepers. There is a great agitation among them for a Jewish peasantry and working-class; though in a capitalist Palestine, it would mean the same old exploitation.

In the Soviet Union the Jewish masses have in a single generation weeded out their middlemen into workers and farmers.

In the Soviet Union it is being done by the Jews themselves. The Soviet government does not put a quota on the Jews in the professions. It does not tell them only a certain percentage can go to the universities, or write books, or practise medicine or law.

There is no nationalist chauvinism in the Soviet Union, though there are many national cultures. Here is another Marxian-Leninist truth that Theodore Dreiser has never understood.

He says, "I am a Communist." And he also says, "I am for nationalism, as opposed to internationalism," and thinks, probably, he means the culture-nationalism practised in the Soviet Union. This leads him to the reactionary argument that the Jews ought to have a nation of their own, and ought to be glad to leave America and Europe *en masse* to found this new nation.

The Zionists would agree with him, of course, just as the Ku Klux Klan at one time had a compact with Marcus Garvey, who wanted to lead all the American Negroes back to Africa. Both Zionist and African nationalists agree with their persecutors that two races cannot live side by side in a country. This theory is completely anti-

Communist, for in the Soviet Union over a hundred races now live peacefully and equally side by side.

Mr. Dreiser wants the Jew to become assimilated in America, or leave it and found a nation of his own. "The Jew insists that when he invades Italy or France or America or what you will, he becomes a native of that country. That is not true. He has been in Germany now for all of a thousand years, if not longer and he is still a Jew. He has been in America all of two hundred years, and he has not faded into a pure American by any means, and he will not."

This sudden preoccupation with "pure" Americanism is shocking, coming from Theodore Dreiser, son of German immigrants. It is the same spirit that one finds today behind the mass deportation of foreign-born workers. Half the working population of this country is foreign-born, or the children of foreign-born, and part of the technique of capitalist exploitation is to terrorize these workers with the threat of one hundred per cent Americanism.

Dreiser denies he is with the Nazis, and we believe him, but any theory of nationalism which forces cultural assimilation of its citizens is a big step toward fascism. Can't he see where such a theory leads him?

In the Soviet Union there is no such cultural imperialism. The Jews who have nationalist feelings have been given a great territory of land, large as France, for their own autonomous republic. Other Jews are scattered throughout the Soviet Union, in factories and collective farms. Those who wish to carry on the old Jewish culture are helped to do so. Those who wish to be assimilated find no prejudices in the way. The choice is free; but Mr. Dreiser points his chauvinist gun at the head of this racial

minority, the Jews, and says, "Either assimilate or get the hell out."

I am one of those who see only good in assimilation. I want to see the time come when all the races have intermingled, and there is an end to this disgusting and barbarous race hatred. I want to see a single, strong, beautiful and united human race, and I am more than willing to surrender all that I know is good in the Jewish tradition in return for a greater good.

But does Mr. Dreiser think he can force assimilation on any people? All the imperialists have tried it with their racial minorities and it has ever been violently and successfully resisted. So long as the Jews are oppressed, they will be forced to cling to each other. Under freedom, they have always assimilated. One of the reasons many orthodox Jewish rabbis hate the Soviet Union is because, under the flag of Soviet freedom, the Jews are assimilated so rapidly there.

Theodore Dreiser, you will not assimilate the Jews to your "pure" Americanism by force. And you cannot persuade four million people to leave the country where so many of them were born; it is too impractical. There are some ten million other Jews in the world, and if each country followed your plan, where is there a virgin land that could take care of fourteen or fifteen millions?

They won't assimilate, they won't leave, and so what is the next step, Mr. Dreiser? Hitler has given one answer.

As for the working-class Jew, the radical Jew, he has already been assimilated to a better America than the one you offer him, Dreiser: the America of the future, the America without capitalism and race hatred, socialist America! In the working-class movement there is no race problem; that is a problem made by capitalism.

The child didn't know the gun was loaded. Some slick Jewish lawyers and publishers fleeced Theodore Dreiser; he brooded on the crime; stumbled on the remarkable idea that the Jew ought to be happy to leave Gentile America, and then he announced this idea.

Frederick Engels once called anti-Semitism the socialism of fools. Theodore Dreiser is not an anti-Semite, but he has invented a kind of socialism directed only against capitalist Jews which smells and sounds dangerously like anti-Semitism.

Here is where, in a time like ours, murder begins. It is a historic fact that every reactionary movement for the past century has begun with anti-Semitism. We are hearing it in America today in the speeches of Father Coughlin and other potential fascists. Capitalism, in danger, finds a scapegoat. It begins with a mock attack on Jewish capitalists, and then gets down to its real business, which is destroying the labor unions, crushing every vestige of liberal thought, burning books, culture and freedom in a grand medieval bonfire.

It is not the slick Jewish lawyers and bankers who have been put in danger by your carelessly spoken words, Mr. Dreiser. They can always take care of themselves. It is the Jewish workers who will suffer, and then the working-class of America, those Kentucky miners you met. We have seen all this before, in Czarist Russia, in Hungary, in Roumania, in Germany.

Theodore Dreiser has damaged his own great name and the cause of the oppressed by his carelessly spoken words. It is my belief he can now undo this damage only by years of devoted battle against anti-Semitism and fascism. The times are too dangerous for any lesser proof, or for childishness.

THE FABLE OF THE IDEAL GADGET

It was Herschel Brickell, the book review editor, who originally started us remembering the famous little fable of the ideal gadget.

Mr. Brickell is a sceptic, a decided sceptic. He scoffs at the childish notions of the Communists who believe that a "revolution is inevitably good." Personally, he doubts very much the whole concept of the "perfectibility of the human race."

Of the Communists, he, with Mr. Krutch, the theoretician of the *Nation*, Oswald Garrison Villard's pocket-philosopher, believes: "There was jam yesterday, says the Reactionary. There will be jam tomorrow, says the Revolutionist. But there is never jam today."

This is a little white lie on Mr. Brickell's part. He has informed the world, in his column, that he signed a deed to a new rural home of his, named "Acorn Cottage." That must give Mr. Brickell two places to live in. The workers who spend their nights sleeping in the subway entrances would certainly call that, not only "jam," but real French pastry.

But to get back to the fable of the ideal gadget. A man once went into an ironmonger's shop and said hesitantly: "Do you sell those gadgets for fixing on doors?"

"Well, sir," replied the assistant, "I am not quite sure if I understand your requirements, but I take it you are needing a patent automatic door-closer?"

"Exactly," said the customer. "One to fix on my pantry door which, by the way, contains a glass window."

"You will want a cheap one, sir?"

"Cheap but serviceable."

"You will prefer an English make, sir?"

"Indeed, that's a most important consideration."

"You will perhaps want one with ornamentation, scroll work and roses, for instance?"

"Oh, no, nothing of the sort, thank you. What I want is as plain and unobtrusive as possible."

"You would like it made of some rustless metal, sir?"

"That would be very convenient."

"And with a strong spring?"

"Well, moderately strong."

"To be fixed on which side, sir?"

"Let me see; the right-hand side."

"Now, sir," said the assistant, "I will go through each point, one by one. You want an efficient (but not too costly) English made, unobtrusive, rustless, unornamented, patent automatic door closer, to be fixed right-handed with a moderately strong spring to a pantry door with a glass window. Is there anything further, sir?"

"Well, it's very good of you to help me like this," said the customer. "I should also like it easily adjusted and easily removable, and above all it must not squeak or need constant oiling."

"In fact," said the clerk, "you want an apparatus combining a variety of qualities, in a word, an absolutely silent, efficient, economical, invisible, corrosive-proof, unornamented, not-too-heavily-springed, easily adjustable, readily removable, British-made, right-handed, patent automatic door closer, ideally fitted in every possible respect for attaching to your pantry door which (I understand you to say) contains a glass window. How is that, sir?"

"Splendid, splendid."

"Well, sir," said the clerk, "I regret that there has

never been any article of that description put on the market, but if you care to visit our wholesale department across the road, you may perhaps be able to make your selection from a reasonably large assortment of our present imperfect models. Good day, sir."

Well, that's the story of the ideal gadget. People like Mr. Brickell, Mr. Krutch and Mr. Villard are saddened by the fact that there are no ideally perfect, readily noble, spiritually supreme workers on the market upon whom they could put their faith to carry through a revolution which shall be quite as noble and as perfect as they themselves are. It is regrettable, but unavoidable, that the Communists must be compelled to carry through a revolution with the present assortment of workers who do not possess all those noble, ideal qualities without which Mr. Brickell and Mr. Krutch do not see the possibilities of establishing a world which shall release men from the miseries and the exploitations which they now suffer.

We would, no less than those defenders of the spirit, prefer to have a working class which should be free from superstition, released from the fears and terrors of capitalist life, men like gods, possessed of the souls of angels —or of book review editors. But we must deal with what capitalism has made of the working class—knowing that the workers are not all angels, knowing that the forces and fears of economic and spiritual tyranny which an army of police and priests exercises over them has made them precisely those things for which the Brickells and the Krutches assume an aristocratic sneer of smug contempt.

If the workers are degraded, if they are forced to live the lives of sub-human creatures, what is responsible if not the very system which, despite their easy, cautious reservations, the Brickells and the Krutches defend? Marx

pointed out long ago that the more power, wealth and luxuriousness accumulated at one end of the capitalist system, the more hunger, exploitation, and degradation accumulated at the other end—the workers' end.

With such people, sneer Brickell and Krutch, how can you establish a "better" world? There is no guarantee that the Communist "Utopia" of tomorrow will be better than the capitalist society of today.

"Better" for whom? Perhaps for Mr. Krutch and Mr. Brickell, it will not be "better." But for the workers it will be "better." It will be a world without unemployment, without exploitation, without warped childhoods, bitter manhoods, broken middle-ages, and Potter's Field deaths. It will be a world in which social security is a fundamental law, not a will-o'-the-wisp. It will be a society in which the ability to produce shall be harnessed to the capacity to consume. It will be a society in which a factory is not an industrial prison, but a dynamo of human activity. It will be a world in which the progress of man shall be "higher" in the stage of material and social development just as capitalism is a stage higher than feudalism.

This world, which is inevitable, which already exists and grows in the Soviet Union, may not be a "perfect" world—men may not be angels and women Mother Marys —but it will be a world in which the horrors and brutalities known today to the workers will be remembered as an evil dream—as a time when such incredible individuals as Mr. Krutch and Mr. Brickell existed and were called by an outlandish unscientific name—capitalist liberals.

DEATH OF A GANGSTER

Dutch Schultz and his gang have just been rubbed out; another execution of a big businessman by his rivals, done with neatness and dispatch.

The newspapers have been filled with minute details of Dutch Schultz's various activities. He was a beer-runner during prohibition, then went into the usury racket, and the policy, racing handbook, "labor trouble" and other rackets of the New York area.

Dutch Schultz banked over $800,000 to his personal account in less than six months. The police knew all this, but what did they ever do about it? Exactly nothing. Dutch never had any legal worries until the federal government tried to get him for an income tax on his huge earnings.

The fact of the matter is: no gangster ever dares commit a murder or start a big new racket until he has bought "protection"; has fixed himself with the big shots of politics.

As Lincoln Steffens pointed out so many years ago, to eliminate political graft and gangsterism you would have to eliminate the whole business system.

The gangster exists by giving bribes and help on election day to the politicians.

The politician pays the businessman off in strike periods, or on the taxation rolls.

And the businessman, fighting a bitter battle with rivals, has to use gangsters and crooked politicians in order to survive. It is the same old vicious circle of capitalism, and I guess we all know the answer to it—the answer of Marx and Lenin.

Dutch Schultz was in delirium before he died. A court

stenographer was placed by the gangster's death bed, and took down a transcript of his babbling.

It has been printed in all the papers, and is a most interesting document. Especially to a student of literature, for the style is uncannily like that of Gertrude Stein, who happens to be a fat, smug old bourgeois lady aesthete, and not a gangster. How do you account for this, fellow-critics?

Here are some typical paragraphs of the dying gunman's ravings:

"No. Don't you scare me. My friends and I think I do a better job. Police are looking for you all over. Be instrumental in letting us know. They are Englishmen and a type I don't know who is best, they or us. Oh, sir, get the doll a roofing. You can play jacks and girls do that with a soft ball and do tricks with it. I take all events into consideration. No. No. And it is no. It is confused and it says no. A boy has never wept nor dashed a thousand kim. Did you hear me?

"Look out, mama, look out for her. You can't beat him. Police, mama, Helen, mother, please take me out. I will settle the indictment. Come on, open the soap duckets. The chimney sweeps. Talk to the sword. Shut up, you got a big mouth! Please help me up, Henny. Max, come over here. French-Canadian bean soup. I want to pay. Let them leave me."

It is an interesting psychological document, and will undoubtedly be printed as a scoop by *Transition* and such-like little art magazines.

Schultz's ravings disclose the fears and plots of a gangster—he talked of hotels he was buying, and the police occur again and again; shooting, bank checks, gilt-edge rackets, million-dollar deals, courtroom phraseology,

and those dirty rats, his business rivals; a strange and fevered world, indeed.

And here is one significant spot that occurs:

"No, no. There are only ten of us and there are ten million somewhere fighting for you, so get you onions up and we will throw up the truce flag.... Oh please let me up. Please shift me. Police are here... Communistic ... strike... baloney...."

Police interpreted this line as meaning that Schultz, through one of his aides, Martin Krompier, had organized racketeering unions "in which Communist elements were always a headache."

Pretty, isn't it? The cops know all about the racketeer unions formed by the gangsters, and how the Communists give the racketeers a headache! But the cops don't touch the racketeers, they go after Communists.

And William Green and Matt Woll and their clique know about these racketeering unions, too; it has been brought to their attention often enough, with all the evidence. But Green and his fat boys, too, they never lay a finger on the racketeers, but start red-baiting campaigns and Communist hunts.

It looks, doesn't it, as if the whole business world, and its allies, the cops and phoney labor leaders, need the racketeer. They protect him, their judges always release him after each crime, the William Green labor leaders grant him charters and help against Communists.

Maybe some day Dutch Schultz will be given a monument, if we let a fascist American government come to power; he was a true pioneer of fascism in this country.

And it is a lesson to some of us; not to smile when we hear of a gangster's death, and say indifferently, "Let them go on killing each other off."

Gangsters are a great problem for the working class to solve. Gangsters are an auxiliary to the police force in capitalism's war on the working class.

Gangsters help keep up the high cost of living. Around New York they have seized on poultry, vegetables, bread and other food for tribute. They have also gone into a particularly mean and vicious game of small usury.

They are not our chief enemy, of course, since they are only the tools of the big businessmen, but they are not to be ignored as an element in the class war in its American setting.

THE HAUNTED FIREHOUSE

It happened in a certain New York firehouse. While the brave firemen were snoring and sleeping each night, an awful commotion would begin. There would be a fierce clatter, as if some giant were hammering on wood, then squeals, screams and snorts. It sounded worse than a children's playground, or a battlefield.

The firemen, cursing and half-asleep, got out of bed to turn on the light. They could see nothing in the dormitory, only beds and rubber boots.

Was it a joke, or what? They looked for a joker, but even Scotty, the smartest fireman of them all, couldn't find one.

The firemen set traps. They lay awake and stared into the darkness. They tried every trick they ever read about in detective stories. But the noise came every night. And they couldn't see who or what was making it.

It scared the firemen. They missed their sleep. Often at

fires, they would be so tired and absent-minded they would even forget to turn on the water.

The Fire Chief held an investigation. The firemen broke down and confessed to him about the noises every night.

"Chief, I think the place is haunted!" said big, red-headed Scotty, pale as a peanut with fear.

"Nonsense!" roared the Chief. "What ghost would be fool enough to haunt a firehouse?"

Scotty, ashamed, stammered out the truth:

"Chief, us boys think the ghost is a horse."

The Chief roared with anger. He didn't like his firemen to be so silly, and scared. As you well know, a fireman should always be brave. But getting angry at them didn't help the firemen. One night the Chief went down to the firehouse himself.

Just to show the boys he wasn't scared, the Chief went to sleep at once. He snored as loud and bravely as he could. Bang! and he jumped up; he too had heard the noise.

"Don't turn on the light," he whispered. He listened in the dark for a while. Then the Chief said, "Yes, boys, you are right. It's a horse."

The Chief stood up in his underwear and twirled his moustaches. He thought and thought and thought.

"I must call in Smoky Pete," he said. "He used to be the best driver in my time, when there were still fire-horses. Pete understands horses."

So the next night Pete was called in. Pete was almost eighty years old, but still healthy and full of fun. Pete lived on a pension in a little cottage on Staten Island, where he fished and chewed tobacco all day, and was happy.

Pete hated to leave his fishing, but when he heard of

the trouble the boys were in, he came at once. Old Pete was always loyal to the Fire Department.

Pete went to sleep at once and snored. Then he was awakened, and heard the horse running up and down the dormitory. But old Pete understood horses. He wasn't scared for a moment, even by the ghost of a horse. Pete knew exactly what to do in such a case.

"Whoa!" he yelled bravely. "Whoa! back! gee, whoa!"

The horse slowed down, backed up, and stood near Pete's bed. Of course, you couldn't see the horse, but you could hear its heavy breathing.

Pete laughed out loud with pleasure. "By the smell, I think it's my old Betsey," he said. "By cripes! I'm glad to see yuh again!"

The horse squealed and almost laughed too, with delight. The firemen couldn't understand her, but old Pete did.

"Yeah, it's my old Betsey," Pete said joyfully, "the gamest, fastest, kindest, biggest-hearted white mare that ever dragged a fire engine over the sidewalks of New York. Gentlemen, salute a queen! You can have all your big Macks, Buicks and Studebakers, but show me a gasoline motor with a noble heart like Betsey's! She liked kids and apples and sugar, and she could count up to four, and once—"

The old fireman was very fond of telling long endless yarns about the old fire-fighting days. He was just about to begin on another such yarn, when Scotty interrupted him, anxiously.

"But ask her why she's haunting us, Pete! Ask her to stop it, if her heart's still true to the Fire Department of New York."

So Pete asked Betsey why she was haunting the boys.

For ten minutes the old horse squealed, whinneyed, sniffed and snuzzled. She made all the queer horse-noises you ever heard.

At least the firemen thought they were only noises. But Pete understood every word, and listened to the end.

"Boys," he then said, quietly, "didn't I tell you Betsey had a big heart? She was having a good time in the fire-horses' heaven, when she heard about that last big tenement fire in New York. Twenty kids and their mothers and fathers were burned up. Betsey likes kids, and she doesn't want it to happen again."

"So what?" the firemen yelled. "We can't prevent fires; we can only put them out. Be reasonable, Betsey!"

"Betsey wants all the New York tenements torn down, and new buildings put up for the kids," Pete said. "She's had time in the fire-horses' heaven to figure out such things."

"But preventing fires, that's up to the Mayor!" wailed Scotty. "That ain't our job, fer gawd's sake, it's the Mayor's!"

Pete explained this patiently to old Betsey. She whinneyed at length, and he translated for her. "Boys, she says she's damned sorry to have bothered you. It's all a big mistake. Betsey won't do it again. She's going to haunt the Mayor after this."

And that's just what Betsey is doing now. She tries to remind the Mayor of the promises he made before election. Didn't he say he'd pull down all the New York tenement firetraps?

Betsey haunts him every night. The Mayor can't sleep. He won't answer Betsey; won't even admit she exists. Our Mayor is always dodging issues like that.

Children, we must all help Betsey spoil his sleep until he has done something about the firetraps.

HE WAS A MAN

He was a short man with a coal-black beard, and a great impressive head, with eyes that could burn with indignation at any human wrong, or soften with pity or sparkle with brilliant wit. At any time, by selling himself to the class he hated, he could have lived in comfort, had a fine home and all the luxuries of a well-to-do burgher. But he preferred poverty to intellectual treason; persecution to obedience to laws which he knew were only the legal front of an oppressive class.

He knew, in return for the tenacity and honesty with which he fought for the working class, exile, hunger, bitter insult, daily travail, arrest and death. But he never wavered in his convictions of the truth; he never altered or softened one word of his condemnation of the ruthless exploitation by the capitalists of the proletariat; he never sank into the swamps of scepticism or despair, or turned to the world which would have paid him well for ceasing his attacks upon it.

He was one of the few truly great men humanity has known. He was one of the most profound philosophers in the history of human thought. And he was an unflinching revolutionist, an ardent fighter, an implacable opponent of all evil.

His name was Karl Marx.

"I am a man," Marx once said in answer to a question put to him by his daughter, "and nothing human is alien to me."

Nothing was alien to this man. Nothing that men experience and suffer was unknown to him; nothing that was human escaped the interest of his thought. For first and foremost, he thought in terms of people, of what they lived for, what they suffered, what they dreamed of.

His great theory of historical materialism which has helped in revolutionizing the scientific thought of the world, is based upon a simple observation, so simple generations of bourgeois professors find it impossible to see it despite their high-powered eyeglasses. It was, that at the basis of all civilization there lies the fundamental truth that the ways and methods that man pursues in getting his food, in finding shelter, in reproducing his kind, determine the social relations in which he lives.

A simple thought. And yet, how many vials of hatred, how many kegs of poison, the professors have emptied on Marx in denial of this elementary truth which any child could see. And they emptied their hatred upon him because it was so simple and because it was a truth: and the professors are not paid their annual salaries to tell truths. On the contrary, chairs in philosophy are conferred upon the most skillful deniers of the truth of Marxism; this is a fundamental maxim of bourgeois universities.

All his life long Marx fought the capitalist class. Early in life, he perceived that any further growth in the progress of humanity, any change in society, must inevitably be wrought by the working class. Only the working class, Marx saw, could be the instrument which abolishes forever classes among men. The bourgeoisie is the last class in society which lives on the labor of any class. Only the proletariat, conquering society, appropriating the instruments of production, will be enabled to rule without living and feasting on the labor of another

part of the population. And Marx fought untiringly to teach, to educate, to help develop the knowledge and understanding of the workers.

He was always extraordinarily pleased when he learned that some worker, who had educated himself, had made efforts to write on political or philosophical questions. He was more pleased by this small beginning of hard-won knowledge by some tanner, like Joseph Dietzgen, than by the whole host of obscure, imposing tomes of the university gentry. He helped, he taught, he worked indefatigably as the leader of the First International, and as a lecturer, to further the education of the workers. About the reviews of his *Capital* he once remarked it was simpler for the workers and children to grasp his meaning than for all the learned professors put together.

The bourgeois biographers would often have us believe that Marx was nothing but a cold, calculating monster, nothing but "a brain" and one who simply used the proletariat as a stepping stone for his own personal ambitions. This is typical of scoundrels who can see men in no other light than as images of themselves.

Did Marx suffer as he did, endure poverty and persecution as he did, simply to further his own ambitions? If he had been ambitious, as these gentlemen are, he would have proceeded as they did on the road to success; by lying, treachery, boot-licking, blackmail, fraud and exploitation. This is the way the ambitious become successful in the capitalist world.

They said the same about Lenin, now about Stalin, they have always said it about labor leaders who were unwilling to compromise themselves or be bribed. It is impossible for these gentlemen, as it is for all bourgeois and philistines, to understand devotion to a cause despite

heaven and hell, except as a means to advance or enrich one's own pocketbook. But Marx, unfortunately for these panderers, was not cut after their pattern. He was a man that only a revolutionary movement could produce; and a man of such caliber that he helped produce, in return, a revolutionary movement.

But Marx was also cut after a pattern which our comrades themselves at times fail to grasp. Marx at no time became an ingrown, blind bigot; he did not succumb to narrow sectarian understandings of people and events. He did not eschew "culture" in the name of "economics"; he did not sneer at emotions as though emotions were incompatible with being a true revolutionist. He lived fully, vitally, completely. He sometimes got drunk; he sometimes made mistakes; he liked a pretty face now and then.

Liebknecht describes an incident in his biography of Marx during which, in an English pub, Marx and his friends had "a bit too much." A fight ensued; in order to save their necks the company went out into the street. "Now we were out in the street," Liebknecht writes, "and Edgar Bauer stumbled over a heap of paving stones. 'Hurrah, an idea!' And in memory of mad student's pranks he picked up a stone and clash! clatter! a gas lantern went flying into splinters. Nonsense is contagious—Marx and I did not stay behind—we broke four or five street lamps."

Besides this, Marx loved poetry, knew whole acts of Shakespeare by heart, and wrote *Capital* in the bargain. I do not mean that every member of the Communist Party should start breaking street lamps because Marx did it once. Quite the contrary. I'm simply illustrating that Marx could laugh as well as fight, love as well as think. This is sometimes important to remember.

ANOTHER SUICIDE

THE home relief investigator finally got around to the dismal rooming house where Joe Clark lived, and knocked at the door. No answer. The investigator mopped his face wearily, and studied the case card in the dingy, spidery light.

Another single man thrown off relief, and probably starving. The investigator sighed, and cursed his job. Many investigators feel as unlucky and rebellious as the people they must investigate for a living.

He knocked again. No answer. It's tough to climb stairs and make several trips to the same case each week. It doubles the investigator's load. He was about to knock again when he smelled gas. His heart jumped with fear and he ran for the janitor.

The janitor knocked, sniffed the gas, too, then hastily opened the door with his key.

And there it was, the shame of modern New York; another suicide among the unemployed. Dead that morning, young Joe Clark lay on the bed, his wrists slashed, his lungs filled with gas from the tube he had put in his mouth.

Joe had been an active member of the Unemployment Council. I knew this splendid young Irish-American, and when I heard the news of his death, it was not only another item in the vast, melancholy statistics of capitalism, but for me, the loss of a friend and comrade.

I met Joe Clark over a year ago, during the winter before last. He was then living with four other unemployed men in a tenement flat on the East Side. No single man could get relief then; they were driven to the filthy municipal flophouses and Bowery breadlines for their living.

These five men had met on the breadlines, and had become members of an Unemployment Council together. They fought side by side for better food and shelter and the rights of the workers whom capitalism has cast out on the streets.

The five buddies pooled their poverty together and rented a flat. They rummaged some old beds from somewhere, a table and a chair or two. Bit by bit they assembled pots and dishes, and had a home of sorts.

They sold pamphlets and *Daily Workers*. Some of them finally got home relief food tickets, and that helped. One way or another they managed to eat. I shared their beans and tea with them occasionally, and never knew better company or finer comrades than this little group.

They were a representative slice of cosmopolitan New York. One husky member of the collective was a Russian-American worker who'd been a lumberjack and farm worker in the far west. I forget his name; and the name of the fiery and witty little Austrian waiter who'd been a Socialist in Vienna, and fought in the Red Guard.

Then there was fellow-worker Thomason, soft-voiced, blond and fearless, a textile worker from the deep south; Bert Anderson, a former British seaman, and Joe Clark, an Irish lad raised in Brooklyn, who'd worked at different trades and served in the U. S. navy yard for some years.

Every day at noon they were at the municipal breadlines, handing out leaflets, making speeches, organizing and teaching the unemployed not to submit to the system, but to assert their manhood at any cost.

The cops beat them up, arrested them often. But every night the comrades were out on the streets again, organizing, speaking, educating.

Here is a sample of what I mean. One cold, slushy De-

cember night they told me they were going up to a meeting in Yorkville, in the Nazi district.

The League Against War and Fascism was holding a meeting there, and the Nazis had threatened for days to invade the meeting, and break it up with force. The League had sent out a call for a defense corps, and these unemployed comrades were responding to the call.

They lived on 18th Street. The meeting was at 86th Street, over three miles uptown. They had no carfare, and on this bitter wet December night, they were starting early because they intended to walk.

Joe's shoes were torn; all their shoes leaked; in their bellies was only beans and tea; they had no rubbers, umbrellas, overcoats; and they were going to hike three miles through sleet and snow, and back again, to fight the damn Nazis.

Joe Clark had come off a breadline into the council. He was a dark, silent youth, rather shy and ingrown, whose most outstanding characteristic was his loyalty.

Just a typical New York kid out of an Irish slum, he'd lost his parents at an early age, and had knocked around by himself in rooming houses ever since, too shy even to make friends with a girl.

Nobody thought he knew what the unemployment fight was really about until Joe was arrested and beaten up at a demonstration before a home relief bureau.

In court, he made a fine, manly speech of self-defense in which he presented the Tammany judge with the picture of a militant worker and his class-program. It surprised everyone, including Joe himself. The speech was reported in the paper of the Unemployed Councils, and Joe showed me the clipping with a shy grin of pride.

He served sixty days on Welfare Island among the

dope-fiends, pimps and Tammany grafters. When he came out he was not feeling well, but stepped back into the work. Joe never really recovered from the beating and the prison term.

The comrades think his head was injured. He suffered from fits of melancholy, but on the whole, kept up his loyal work in the councils.

Then the Home Relief separated the group, put them into separate rooming houses. A few weeks ago a new rule segregating the single men was passed. Each man had also to be re-investigated.

Two weeks went by for Joe without any food or any assurance that he would have room rent. He told nobody of his trouble, but kept to himself. Something must have snapped in the poor boy's mind at last, and he made the biggest mistake a militant worker can make—suicide.

It was the only time Joe Clark ever helped the bosses. By killing himself he removed one more of their own sworn enemies, one more of the proletarian soldiers who will hew the way to a free and Soviet America.

FREMONT OLDER: LAST OF THE BUFFALOES

Fremont Older is dead. His passing must have brought real grief to Californians who remember their state before realtors, Red-baiters and the Hollywood hams had made it the joke of the western world.

Older was a romantic figure, one of the last of the pioneer editors. California is only several generations from the pioneers, and the old-timers still know how to admire

men whose strength owes nothing to money or modern press agentry.

In cartoons by Rollin Kirby and other such trained-seal artists, you will find a stock figure who symbolizes Mr. Average Citizen—the taxpayer, the good father and patriot. This typical American is middle-aged, paunchy and ineffectual, a little business man in eye-glasses, the flabby dweller of a steam-heated office. His hair has thinned out and so has his soul. He clutches a brief-case and an umbrella. Some racketeering politician is always giving Mr. Average Citizen a fine raping, and you can see he is indignant, as noble in his civic wrath as a wet hen. That is why the umbrella is raised in perpetual protest.

Fremont Older was an American of the earlier school. I worked for him in San Francisco in 1925. He was then near his seventieth year, but still tall and rangy as Leatherstocking, with a great piratical moustache, shaggy eyebrows, a booming voice, and a hatred of trivial bunk. Much of the fire had gone out of him, and he was tired of living. But you could see that here was a real man, one of the last monuments of the heroic age of the American bourgeoisie.

He had migrated from Wisconsin to the "golden state" in 1872, when he was sixteen years old, and worked as a printer and reporter in San Francisco, the city with whose history his own life is interwoven.

The primitive democracy of gold-miners and pioneer ranchers was still roaring lustily, and whelping a free and easy culture of its own. Hearst, Robert Dollar, Herbert Fleishhacker and a few score other unimaginative hogs hadn't yet reduced the glorious land and sea and sky to their private money trough. Their dull dictatorship was not yet established, and the common man could still whoop

as he struck it rich. It was a time of adventure and free land.

Fremont Older was as worthy a contemporary to Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and later, Jack London, Ambrose Bierce and Frank Norris as William Lloyd Garrison, another famous editor, was to Emerson and Thoreau. Here was a Jeffersonian democracy of sunburned men with horny hands, making money and slinging it about recklessly; digging ditches, triggering six-shooters and writing a full-blooded, fearless literature marked by the masculine sentimentality of pioneers.

Yale and Harvard were effete, but most of these Athenians of the gold camps hadn't been to college. I remember Older telling me how he had first run into the poetry of Walt Whitman, his favorite bard. It was in one of the more famous whore houses on the Barbary Coast. We can assume that the young reporter spent many of his social evenings in these gaudy dance halls. In the midst of the carnival one night, the Madam, a stern and stately dame held up her hand for silence. She stepped to the middle of the floor, and in the hush, read for the gamblers, miners, whores and traders, divine stanzas from the epic of America's first proletarian poet. The riff-raff crowd liked it. Fremont Older was moved by it. Whitman's large, diffuse and cosmic democracy was the true voice of millions of pioneer Americans like Fremont Older. A great message, yet dangerously incomplete, for its industrialism left them an easy prey to the fascist Willie Hearsts and the sordid Fleishhackers.

Older became the outstanding newspaper editor of the Pacific Coast; but the bourgeois contradictions were always at war in his life. A true circulation wolf, he was ruthless in his methods for piling up newspaper profit,

yet could never forget the grand democratic dream of Walt Whitman. His newspaper, to the discomfort of the churchly, printed raw human documents, honest confessions out of the lives of convict burglars, red-light madams, dope fiends and others. The confessions of Donald Lowrie and Jack Black first appeared as serials in his paper. Older was one of the first prison reformers in America.

He was also one of the few influential people in this country to take anything but a conventional attitude toward prostitution. When the reformers and preachers of San Francisco were conducting one of their annual orgies of virtue, to drive out the whores, Older and a few friends organized a parade of the women. With banners flying in the sunlight, several hundred of them in fancy clothes marched down Market Street and into the aisles of the ritziest and most pious church in San Francisco. Their spokeswoman, a well-known Madam, seized the pulpit and made a speech. She asked the respectable reformers what they meant to do with the "fallen women" after persecuting them out of their jobs. What did they mean to do about the social conditions that produced new armies of prostitutes each year? The godly, then as now, had no better answer than to call in the cops.

"Not until the sun excludes you, do I exclude you," Walt Whitman had boomed grandly yet vaguely to the prostitutes and malformed of society. This was the spirit of Fremont Older. It was a kind of Christian anarchism that swayed his emotions. Lincoln Steffens, Governor Altgeld, Clarence Darrow, were others of the same generation of anarchists. They were the last real individualists in this country, survivors of a primitive democracy like buffaloes in a zoo on the prairies. They believed all social

evil was the fault of bad individuals, and that reform could be accomplished through the work of good individuals. In brief, they had a naive faith in the capitalist system. This is why few of them, except Lincoln Steffens in his later years, recognized the war of classes, and attached themselves loyally to the working class for the building of a new system.

It was inevitable, as one reform after another collapsed and the system continued to grind out new evils, that these men should grow disillusioned with the years. They were pouring their passion into a bottomless hole in the sand. Lincoln Steffens has described the tragedy of his generation in his classic autobiography.

Just before the earthquake of 1905, Fremont Older and his paper led the reformers in an exposure of the grafters who ruled San Francisco. It was the same brazen crowd that still rules every American city, but Fremont Older must have believed the millennium would set in if he could rid the earth of this group of minor racketeers. The fight was long and hazardous. Once he was kidnaped off the streets. His life was frequently threatened. But he broke the ring, and put the boss of San Francisco, Abe Ruef and others in jail.

No millennium followed, nor did Santa Claus. It was the first of many spiritual shocks to this honest reformer. Thinking it over, Fremont Older made one of the most amazing about-faces in American political history. He began a campaign to get Abe Ruef pardoned, and stated his Christian anarchist reasons.

The episode probably helped him catch some glimmer of the class forces that really created America's shame. Fremont Older became a "friend of labor." The brightest spot on the record he leaves to posterity will be the gal-

lant manner in which he leaped to the defense of Tom Mooney. In the reactionary world of California, it was the outcast position to take, but Older stuck by his guns and fought for Mooney through all the years.

The darkest spot of his record is the fact that for the past fifteen years Fremont Older worked for Dirty Willie Hearst. That degraded panderer and fascist millionaire has always had a cynical practise of buying literary "names" for big money, much as he buys curios, castles and women. Older despised Hearst, but he was old, disillusioned, and thought he needed money. He became a Hearst editor. All the courage and power and rugged genius seemed to vanish from his journalistic work. At last the lion was caged.

This is about the time I knew Fremont Older. I was a young and reluctant inmate of the Hearst bawdy-house and one day kicked off the traces. Older called me into his office and reasoned with me. It was a curious conversation. I caught a glimpse of the dark defeat that had broken the old lion's spirit.

"Nothing can be changed in this world," he said. "It's all a matter of glands. There is no good or evil, men are determined by their glands. The criminal and saint, the capitalist and Communist, all are made such by their glands. It's true that a man has to degrade himself to work for William Randolph Hearst, but we are all degraded who must live and work under capitalism. You cannot avoid being socially a sinner, any more than a criminal can escape the dictation of his glands. Are you better than I am, or the rest of us? Is it social to try to save your own private soul, when all the rest of us must be sinners? Isn't this spiritual selfishness? Aren't you the real individualist, the holier-than-thou prig?"

And so forth. It was easy to sense the long, lonely nights and days in which this great old man had tortured himself trying to rationalize the position he was in. I felt sorry for him but rejected his crooked logic, then and now. There is a better life to be led than being a piece of Hearst property with "spiritual" qualms. Capitalism is not eternal, and will not go on forever crushing and corrupting vital spirits like Fremont Older. Even now, hosts of young American intellectuals are seceding from capitalism, and the false dilemma in which Fremont Older found himself trapped. He was born fifty years too soon —that was his misfortune. The generous young Communist pioneers of our day have a bloodier but more glorious path before them and they, too, may die—but not in chains.

A SAMSON OF THE BRONX

Julius Alexander, a young Jewish machinist from the Bronx, stands six feet, four inches, in his socks. He has shoulders like a buffalo, and fists like sledges.

He looks rough, but Mr. Alexander has never been in a police court in his life. He is a family man of peace, a good machinist, a steady worker, and a pillar of Bronx respectability. What is more, Mr. Alexander is a model American citizen.

Last week this amiable human skyscraper was driving his little Ford homeward to the Bronx. Passing through Yorkville, which is the section in New York where the German immigrants live, Mr. Alexander's car broke down. He pulled over to the curb in front of 228 East 86th Street and began tinkering with the car.

We can be sure his heart was still at peace. A broken-down car does not irritate a born machinist; indeed, one of his reasons for keeping a car is to fill his life with these blissful interludes when he can tinker with it. Then two fat burghers sauntered by and snickered at him.

One of them said distinctly, "It looks like a dirty Jew." This amazed Mr. Alexander. There are over two million Jews in New York. Most have stopped feeling any different from other human beings. Mr. Alexander, for instance, always thought of himself as an American. He was not ashamed of being a Jew, but he never could see why the fact was important one way or the other. And here was a stranger sneering at him, "Look at the dirty Jew."

So Mr. Alexander stood up to his full height, and said, "Scram!" That was all, but the two fat men scrammed. Then Mr. Alexander saw a sign hanging from the building where he had parked.

This sign shrieked in large letters: "Gentiles, organize! Unite and fight Jewish Talmudic gangsterism!"

What right had anyone to hang a sign like that in the street? Did it mean that they were trying to start a massacre of the Jews?

Mr. Alexander's parents had once told him of how the Czar's drunken gangsters used to kill and persecute the Jews in Russia. But this was America; this was New York; nothing like that could happen here. Wasn't there a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution? Hadn't thousands of young Jews fought and bled in the war that made America safe for democracy? Wasn't Congressman Sirovich a Jew?

The bewildered giant stood there for many minutes, reflecting painfully. Finally, as an American citizen, he

decided that a sign like that had no place here, and that it was his duty to destroy it.

So he got two mops he happened to have in his car, and calmly and methodically set about pulling the sign down.

It happened that some three hundred German Nazis were having one of their regular meetings in that building. The speaker was an obscure racketeer named Healey, who is on the Hitler payroll.

A shriek of horror rang from the rear.

"Mamma, papa! The Communists!" squeaked a little Brown Shirt who had happened to look out of the window. "They are tearing down the sign!"

Healey's face paled to the shade of milk of magnesia. He was stricken dumb. Yes, for a terrible moment it seemed as if the ball-bearings on his glib tongue had worn out, and his career on the Nazi payroll ended forever.

All around him the other Nazis gibbered, squeaked and rattled. It was a dreadful moment. Communists! the Communists were coming, their most powerful enemy! It was then that Healey rose to the full stature of his manhood. There was a water pitcher on the speaker's table. He seized it with great presence of mind. Bold as a stuffed lion, he made for the window, where he poured water down on the hard-working Mr. Julius Alexander.

"You dirty Jewish coward!" he yelled, "away with you! Go back to your President Rosenfelt! Heil Hitler!"

It was to no avail. Mr. Alexander is not afraid of a little ice-water. A Yorkville crowd had gathered, hundreds of onlookers among whom were many young Nazi huskies from the beer-halls, lads with brass knuckles, blackjacks and other weapons of the Hitler culture. They were threatening Mr. Alexander, it seems. By this time everyone had realized that Mr. Alexander was alone. The

panic had been stemmed. Now the three hundred Nazis in the hall charged down the steps like a new Light Brigade, and also attacked Mr. Julius Alexander. Blows and kicks rained upon him, and shouts and curses. But he proceeded calmly with what he thought his American duty and finished tearing the sign down.

Then he turned around slowly, put his fists up in the regulation manner, and took on the four hundred Nazis. It was his simple American duty. He was doing quite a bit of damage when the police arrived. Perhaps this is fortunate for the innocent giant; Nazis don't fight with their fists, but use sneaky knives and kidnapers' blackjacks.

And that's the whole story, except that the lion-hearted Healey actually brought charges of assault and battery against Mr. Alexander. He charged the machinist with a brutal assault on the four hundred Nazis. The charge, strangely enough, was dismissed.

And what is the great lesson in all this? First, that the Nazis (or National Socialistic Workers Party of American Aryans, as they call themselves, no less!) have been having these meetings for over a year, and hanging out the same signs. Men like Mr. Alexander should read the *Daily Worker* and study these things that are happening in New York and America, so that they will not again be taken by surprise.

Second lesson: Mr. Alexander is not a Communist, or he would know that the best way to fight these Nazis is to organize the working people of America, be they Jew and Gentile, Yankee, Negro and German, into a great army that will defend the workers' rights against the deluded slaves of Hitler. No individual, even one as powerful as Julius Alexander, can beat the Nazis alone. It takes mass action, Julius.

HELL IN A DRUGSTORE

THE poor druggist has made his last stand on his broken arches. He has served the last customer with epsom salts, rouge or icecream, and locked up the store. He trudges home, thinking, "Well, now I can get away from the smell of cheap soap, ether and rubber goods. Thank God, I can smell my baby's diapers again. The store is peaceful at last; I can sleep."

But the store isn't peaceful. Every well-run drugstore carries at least 60,000 items. That is what we mean, children, by civilization. And at the witching hour of midnight, all these strange symbols of civilization come to life. Yes, sir, it's just like the fairy tales you have read.

And if you think the world is a mess, you should visit a drugstore at this hour. Each of the 60,000 is a rank individualist, and they squabble, fight and abuse each other all night. They act like a regiment of Hitlers.

Last night, for example, in a certain drugstore there were at least eight fights going on. Step by step, each of the 60,000 items had been lined up on bellicose sides. It would have resulted in something like a world war, and the place would have been a wreck. But the sun rose just in time, and as you know, this is when the clock and the pot lose their lives in the fairy tales.

What were they fighting about? To begin with, a bottle of Listerine, fat, yellow and smug, had begun boasting loudly how it could cure athlete's foot, and dandruff, and halitosis, and a lot of other things.

But a bottle of pink Lavoris sneered at Mr. Listerine.

"So what?" said young Lavoris. "I can do all that and cure pyorrhea, besides. And what is more," he said with

the vanity of such drugs, "the ladies like me. I look better and smell better than you."

Pompous Mr. Listerine almost turned pink himself with anger. And six other mouth-washes butted in, boasting of their own merits. It was a war of each against all.

Chocolate Sundae, who is a natural-born pacifist and liberal, tried to soothe them.

"After all, you are brothers," he reminded them sweetly. "The same chemical formula fills your bottles; will you let a slight difference in color and price lead to war?"

And Sundae had to rush off in a moment to another corner, where a fierce new quarrel was on. Castor Oil, always a bully, had taken a punch at little Ex-Lax. The big gallon was actually jealous of the brown tin container, who had become so popular recently.

"I believe in honesty!" yelled Castor Oil. "This little punk is just a cheap crook. I am what I am, but he pretends to be chocolate candy."

"I do the job, don't I?" little Ex-Lax whimpered. "Just because you're older you pick on me. Hit a guy your size; try Cascarets, for instance."

"I will," yelled Castor Oil, "he's a crook, too." So the stout old bully socked Cascarets, and then went after Feenamint, and a dozen other candy-coated dynamiters of the American gut. It was a riot. What could poor Sundae do but wring his hands? Even the enema bags got into the fight, and they are usually quiet and mind their own business.

Off in the mysterious backroom, where the prescriptions are made, even worse was going on. It was more dangerous back there, because some of these drugs were killers.

Little black pills and powders with long Latin names were threatening each other with murder. Opium said he

could lick Arsenic. This was a joke; but Opium was always hopped up with his own day-dreams. So Arsenic had jabbed him just once, and the poor dope had curled up. But Morphine butted in. Then a lot of other alkaloids. What could Sundae do?

Especially since he could hear out in front the roar of a new battle. Twenty different kinds of smelly soap, each claiming to be the best for the skin, were fighting each other; and belligerent cans of Flit and roachkiller were, for some strange reason, battling among them. What could you make of such a mess? Then the cough medicines and nose drop compounds discovered a *casus belli*, and sailed into each other. A box of toilet paper brutally slugged a bottle of Maraschino cherries. Rubbing Alcohol, a cheap bruiser, knocked out Omega Oil, that refined young boxer, with a surprise blow.

You would think the women would stay out of such a scene. But when they got started they were worse than the men. You never heard such a screaming and hair-pulling. Carrot Rouge spit in the face of Brick Rouge. All the nail-files and nail-paints smacked each other around. And old Mineral Oil, what did he do? Was he pouring peace on these troubled waters? No, he was strangling a case of corn-salve, and kicking with his feet at the chewing gum.

That's how it went on until morning. It's the fault of the system. After all, why manufacture so many kinds of mouth-wash and call them different bragging names? This leads to war in drugstores and in life. Why not get the best formula for mouth-wash and make up big quantities of it, and sell it cheap to the people? Don't you think so, children?

But no, the system has to make war. And even the drugs

fight after midnight. Yes, the store would have been a wreck. But then the Sun came up, and I hope, and you hope, too, that the Sun of Communism will soon shine on us all and bring us peace.

ART YOUNG: ONE-MAN UNITED FRONT

Art Young is the most beloved of American cartoonists. His wit and humor spring from the American soil; he belongs in the tradition of Mark Twain, Bob Ingersoll and Abe Lincoln.

More years ago than many of us can remember, Art Young discovered the working-class revolution. Immediately he enlisted on the side of the workers, and has never stopped for a moment turning out his famous and powerful anti-capitalist cartoons.

Art Young is now rounding his 67th year. His friends are celebrating the event this Sunday night. The old Civic Repertory Theatre on 14th Street, where the Theatre Union gives its plays, will be bulging from cellar to roof with some of the grand army of Art's admirers.

This ageless veteran, with his whimsical chuckle, his pert blue eye, and that humorous profile of embonpoint he has drawn in so many auto-libellous portraits, deserves such homage as this.

No other man in the first rank of American cartoonists (excepting Robert Minor, of course) can show as long and consistent a record in the revolutionary movement.

Art Young's talents were not overlooked by the capitalist press. To my own knowledge he has been for years

receiving regular offers from Arthur Brisbane and other syndicates. They wanted to put him on a yearly salary that often went as high as $20,000 a year. Art Young had no prejudice against such a salary, and he never felt like a martyr, but he just couldn't take time off from his own job to do the picayune things these others wanted of him. He was born to fight Mr. Fat. He was born to be one of those artists who help build a better world.

And so Art Young continued his chuckling, good-humored little war against the Fat Bully, capitalism. He showed Mr. Fat frying in an Americanized hell, he showed him eating like a hog, making war like an ape, crushing the bones of children, shooting down workers and their mothers and wives.

Underneath all the good humor Art Young always had the great cleansing hate of the true revolutionist. It is out of great love that such hate is born. Because Art Young loves the American people so much, with all their follies, weaknesses, idiocies, he is savage in his contempt of the capitalist system that is destroying this people.

Some of his cartoons have the monumental gloom of a Doré, the illustrator of Dante's *Inferno*.

Many legends are told of Art Young, one of the best known being about his trial for sedition during the war. The judge was about to sentence him to twenty years in jail, when a snore was heard in the courtroom. It was Art Young. He had become bored with all this phoney legalism, even though he himself was on trial for his life.

And he still goes on making legends. The best one is this latest one, of the celebration this Sunday night.

Believe it or not, this celebration is the result of a united front by Communists and Socialists.

The circular letter that went out to organize the affair

was signed jointly by Norman Thomas, leader of the Socialist Party, and Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party. It is the first time such a joint appeal has been seen.

Among the groups sponsoring the affair are the Socialist periodicals, the *New Leader*, and *Arise*, and the Socialist club, "Rebel Arts." Also the John Reed Club, the *New Theatre* magazine, the *New Masses*, and the League for Mutual Aid.

Art Young must be feeling fine to have this celebration taking place under such auspices. He has always been a travelling one-man united front in himself.

It is indeed a tribute to the universal affection he inspires that his magic name was enough to break down the wall that has separated the workers and weakened them so long in the fight against fascism.

May the magic spread. May the united front go on. And may there be at least forty more of these yearly celebrations for Art Young.

I want to see him hobbling around at the age of 107 in a Soviet America. He will be chuckling, I am sure, at his own rheumatic pains and the funny crick in his back. He will draw pictures of himself looking like a jolly, fat old Father Time.

Best of all, the Soviet American youngsters will be around him always. And Art Young will tell them stories out of the dark ages, funny stories about the crazy capitalist system they fortunately had never experienced.

And then he will get out his drawing pad and make pictures for them of all those prehistoric monsters, the fat apes, tigers and hogs who once ruled the world.

In the Soviet Union Art Young would long ago have been given the highest title in the gift of a workers' re-

public, that of People's Artist. Millions of workers would have celebrated his jubilee throughout the nation.

But our New York celebration will be good enough for America. It will have a historic flavor. Workers from the waterfront, the clothing factories, and the offices, will unite with the New York intellectuals to pay homage to this People's Artist.

Heywood Broun, president of the American Newspaper Guild, will be the chairman; Socialist singers and Communist dancers will join hands in laying a gay wreath of affection at Art's floppy and bewildered feet.

May this united front go on. May the dark curse of disruption be shattered forever, after this night with magical Art Young. And may our People's Artist flourish and laugh and blaspheme against Mr. Fat for many years.

And if I may close with a suggestion to the committee in charge of this celebration:

Let us have a solemn moment there, when in the name of the Socialist and Communist Parties, Art Young will be crowned as the first People's Artist of America. If ever a life in art merited this great title, it is the life and deeds of Art Young.

THE MINERS OF PECS

Surely there must be some playwright around who will see in the great and terrible drama of the self-entombment of the twelve hundred miners in the pits in Pecs, Hungary, the material for a profoundly moving proletarian play.

Out of the heroic struggle of these diggers, who for one hundred and ten hours in the blackness and poisoned

air of the pits, re-enacted part of the history of the whole working class, he could write a drama that would not only stir the hearts of workers but could draw for them also an invaluable political lesson.

Against the pale and enfeebled caricatures of the Broadway playpots, this proletarian work would loom powerful and intense. It would stand as a searing indictment of the brutality and inhumanity of capitalism, and be a lasting monument to the resolute and desperate courage of those simple miners who preferred to shut off the air pumps and blow the mine and themselves to pieces rather than submit further to the slow, tortured death of exploitation.

For one hundred and ten hours they crouched in the galleries. The space from wall to wall, and from the floor of the coal seam to the propped roof, was so small they could not stand upright. They braced against each other's knees, and slept, like this, humped up, twelve hundred men. In the darkness there was nothing except hunger, thirst and the slow poison of the underground air. There was only this—and the bright, unextinguishable light of their class courage. It burned like a torch in the darkness of their voluntary tomb. It was with them, it sustained them and fired their souls, when they knew madness creeping on them out of the dripping shafts, when their comrades perished, raving from hunger and thirst.

Above them, on the surface, the mine owners raged, the government officials ran like rats from office to newspaper agency frantic to conceal this climax of terror and starvation. At the pit mouth, squadrons of soldiers and police with machine guns, were drawn up, waiting. But there was nothing to shoot, nothing to club. Their terror was futile.

Where terror could not conquer the diggers, the bourgeoisie of Hungary invoked that old traitor of the workers —the reactionary trade union flunkeys. One can see them, timid and crafty, descending into the mine shafts, wheedling these men who were holding their own lives in their hands like a bomb. The schooled mouth spoke the old lies and the crafty language of betrayal. But they failed. The miners, enraged, seized them as hostages, as the ambassadors of the enemy class!

Goemboes had invoked the devil of the working class, the Mephistophelian betrayer, who had sold to the bourgeoisie the souls of working class after working class, in Germany, England, France, America. But in the pit the devil failed his master. They knew, the miners, that in the end there can be no compromise between worker and boss, between miner and mine owner.

They went mad there in the darkness. They almost died of thirst, and hunger. The weak collapsed. The strong continued. Hour after hour went by. The soldiers squatted at their guns. The news of their threat to commit mass-suicide was flashed around the world. People were shocked and sickened. That men should threaten to kill themselves for $1.50! The "good" people could not understand it. The whole barbarous rottenness of the Goemboes regime burst open on the world.

But the American liberals have nothing to be proud of. Their own master class is stained with the same filth and stands convicted of the same brutality. Not so many months ago, Pennsylvania mine police bombed and dynamited abandoned holes in the hills out of which starving and cold Pennsylvania miners were digging a little coal to use or to sell. This was the "humane" labor policy of the American masters!

Finally they came out of the pits. They had ordered 375 coffins to be lowered into the mine for the dead. They had threatened to blow up the works, sacrificing themselves as a protest against oppression. It was this that made the mine owners agree to grant some of the demands. Not the lives of twelve hundred men, but the loss of the mine pricked the soul of the bourgeoisie where it lies—in their pocketbook.

But when they stood on the surface of the earth again, the miners knew they had been tricked. The grants had been withdrawn. Not wage raises, but bonuses when Christmas came. When Christ's charity descends once more on the children of men, the bourgeoisie of Hungary and the British exploiters, shall, out of the goodness of their withered and blackened hearts, return to them an infinitesimal fraction of the profits the sweat and blood of the miners of Pecs tore from the earth.

Magnificent and terrible was this deed of the diggers. It lit up, like a burning and unfailing light, the deep sources of courage and the desperate souls of the proletariat. It showed to what extents of sacrifice and heroism the working class will go. It showed to what inhuman depths the capitalists have pushed the life of the masses.

And yet, this was not the correct path for the workers to follow. It resembles more that custom of the Oriental who cuts open his own stomach on the doorsteps of a state official as a protest against injustice. Shall the workers of the world commit a monstrous act of universal hari-kari on the doorsteps of capitalism? Shall they merely shock the bourgeoisie with the terribleness of huge suicides?

There is another road. It leads up a steep and difficult path. It demands the same heroic courage, that same unflinching will to sacrifice. It is the road that leads away

from the passive resistance of the miners of Pecs to the mountains of revolutionary action the workers of Russia climbed. At its head marches the ranks of the fighters of the Communist Party. This is the road the miners of Pecs, and the workers of the world, in time, shall follow.

BASEBALL IS A RACKET

We are in the process of watching the birth and evolution of a new national hero. He appears to be a tall, gangling young man with a strong right arm who hails from the cotton belt, and pitches a terrifically fast ball for nine innings a few times a week. At present his name is known to probably more Americans than the name of, let's say, Nicholas Murray Butler, who also amuses his countrymen. Down in Sportsman's Park, in Saint Looie, a crowd of 50,000 citizens howl themselves hoarse when the name of Dizzy Dean roars from the umpire's mouth. According to private reports, even the Mississippi "lifts itself from its long bed" when the Dizzy goes to the mound to put on his stuff for the honor of St. Louis and a couple of extra thousand dollars World Series money for Frankie Frisch's boys.

Dizzy seems to be quite a boy. Not only did he single-handedly, it appears, win the pennant for St. Louis, but he has managed to accumulate around himself a whole mythology of legends that would do justice to any of the old Greek gods. Dizzy's what the boys on the sport sheets call "color" stuff. Strong right arm for pitching, but kinda weak upstairs.

In the fourth game of the Series Dizzy got lammed with a fast ball trying to break up a double play. It smacked

him square in the forehead. It would have been curtains for an ordinary mortal, but not for Dizzy; he just passed out cold for a couple of seconds and then came to fresh as a daisy.

Furthermore, it appears that Dizzy has a heart as big as a wagon. After Saturday's ball game, a couple of smartly dressed gentlemen tried to pick Dean up in their fast roadster as he was leaving the ball park. They offered to drive him back to the hotel. Dizzy, whose heart seems to be unspoiled and whose mind is a bit weak, grandly accepted the offer. He almost gave poor Sam Breadon, the Cardinal's president, heart-failure. "My god," yelled Sam, "haven't you ever heard of gamblers and kidnappers?" But Dizzy just beamed, the idol light shining from his face. Dizzy's going around town now with a police guard.

With each successive game the fables about the Dizzy Dean grow. It helps business along, piles up the gate receipts, gives the newsboys from the big city papers something to write about, and continues building the tradition of glamor and prowess that surround the heroes of the diamond. Dizzy seems to be a simple-minded, Ring Lardner "You Know Me, Al" ball player, raised down in the Southwest on grits and cornbread, gifted with a powerful pitching arm and a keen pair of eyes. But the stockholders of the St. Louis Cardinals and the racketeers and speculators who infest organized baseball as they do every other national sport in the country today, have a keener eye than Dizzy's pitching ones and a stronger arm when it comes to counting the season's profits.

Like everything else in the country, baseball is not run primarily for the fans, but for the pocketbooks of the stockholders. Communists are often ridiculed for their insistence that everything in the present capitalist system

is a "racket." Hollywood recently caricatured the Communist who shouts on Mother's Day, "It's a racket!" Well, it is. It's a racket for the flower merchants, for the candy manufacturers, for the pulpit. The sickening sentimentality that is deliberately fostered by the manufacturers, the false mother-love decorations that surround the price on the box of flowers, attest to the way the emotions of people are deliberately and viciously exploited by the manufacturer for his own profit. Baseball, too, the love of sport, is deliberately and viciously exploited by the promoters.

Dizzy probably loves baseball. So do millions of other Americans. I remember that we all wanted to learn how to throw a two-finger drop earlier than we wanted to learn why the earth turns around the sun, or the origin of surplus value. But there is a sharp division made in the life of people today: sport, active participation in sport, stops early in life. Life under capitalism is not an integrated life, it is not full in the sense that sport is looked upon as one of the activities of a fully developed man. And, strange as it may seem, to those who see the Communist as a professional kill joy, he has a firmer, richer belief in the development of the full man, than the health culturist like Bernarr Macfadden, whose advertising caters to the sick and the shamed, or the neo-Humanist, whose "full" life is an abstraction born of the library.

One has only to look at the Soviet Union to see how sport is deliberately organized as part of the whole life of the proletariat. But in America, baseball is a different thing. There were 50,000 fans out there in St. Louis and 50,000 more in Detroit shouting their heads off every time Pepper Martin took a head-first slide into second or Hank Greenberg leaned his bat against a fast ball.

They were playing in the World Series too. It was vicarious baseball for the masses, phantoms of their own longing were smacking out homers, striking out the third man with the bases full, or making a miraculous stop of a line hit.

Workers love baseball. But baseball, in its own way, is used as an "opium of the people." The "bosses" are cashing in on the "heroes" and cashing in on the frustrated love of the people for sports.

A CONVERSATION IN OUR TIME

(THE scene is a dingy bare flat in Greenpoint. Quincy Adams Martini, a native one hundred per cent American bookkeeper who has been unemployed for three years, is reading the New York *Times*. His wife is cooking the usual charity relief supper of baked beans and coffee. Little Franklin Martini, aged eight, rushes in excitedly. The kid is bright, but pale and too anemic looking to be a good specimen of bourgeois childhood. He has been proletarianized like his pale father and mother. Now go on with the story.)

Franklin: Say, pop, there's a man making an election speech at the corner. He said the reason so many people are out of work is because this is a capitalist country. What does that mean, pop?

One Hundred Per Cent Father: Well, Franklin, that sounds like one of those Communist agitators again. You shouldn't listen to such people.

Franklin: Why not, pop?

Wise Old Pop: Because daddy don't want you to. Those people try to hurt our country. They lie about us.

Franklin: Why do they lie about us, pop?

Pop: Because they don't belong here, but in Russia. They really hate this country.

Franklin: The man that spoke was a Negro, he didn't look like a Russian. But why should he hate this country?

Pop: Because such people have no appreciation of the country that gives them a living.

Franklin: What's a living, pop?

Pop: Now Franklin, run away, I can't be pestered by your eternal questions when I'm trying to read a newspaper.

Franklin: But I want to know what that man meant when he said this is a capitalist country.

Pop: Frank, you mustn't tease your father.

Franklin: I'm not teasing, daddy. I only want to know. Us kids have been talking about it and wanting to know.

Pop: You mean to say your gang of little brats actually discuss these things?

Frank: Yes, daddy.

Pop: My goodness! (He puts his hands over his eyes.) So this is what happens when one has to live in a common working-class neighborhood. It corrupts the children. Listen, Franklin, I see I must clear up your mind on this matter. Come here, my boy, and daddy will explain everything.

Frank (trustfully): Yes, pop.

Pop: Franklin, the first thing to remember is that this is a free country. There are capitalists here, but they have no more rights than you or I.

Frank: Do they get more to eat than we do?

Pop: Yes, they get more to eat, but that isn't what counts. What counts is that we are as good as they are.

It's not like Europe, where they have kings and noblemen. Here every child can be president.

Frank: Yes, I heard that in school, pop. Us kids think it's a lot of baloney.

Pop: What did you say, Franklin?

Frank: Baloney.

Pop (shuddering): It is not baloney, Franklin. It is the truth.

Frank: No, pop, you gotta have a pull with Tammany Hall to be president.

Pop: So that's what you've been learning on the streets with all those little gangsters? This is terrible. Go away. I want to read.

Frank: Can I see the funnies?

Pop: There are no funnies in this paper. (The boy meditates.)

Frank: Pop, what is a capitalist country? You said you'd tell me.

Pop (patiently): I'll explain some other time.

Frank: I want to know now.

Pop (groaning): A capitalist country is only a name for a place where every man has equal rights. He can run a factory or own his own farm and make as much money as he wants without having a lot of grafting politicians take it away from him. That's what capitalism really means—the right to get rich for everyone.

Frank: So, why can't you find a job, daddy?

Pop: Daddy has told you that many times. The reason I can't find a job is that business is slow. There is a depression.

Frank: What's that?

Pop: Daddy has told you many times. A depression is a

time when business stops because people lose confidence in their country.

Frank: Why do they lose confidence?

Pop: Because the government is bad. Hoover was a bad president, but now we have a good president. Everything is getting better.

Frank: But mom says they're getting worse.

Pop: She doesn't read the papers. Your mom has no understanding of politics.

Frank: She said food was going up.

Pop: Yes, the President did that as the first step in recovery.

Frank: What's recovery?

Pop: That's when things get better.

Frank: Are they getting, pop?

Pop: Yes, they're getting better.

Frank: You said that last winter when you promised to buy me a microscope set for Christmas, daddy, but then you didn't because things were still the same.

Pop (doggedly): I know, I know, but now they're really getting better.

Frank: Pop, just exactly what did that speaker mean when he said that this is a capitalist country?

Pop (shouting): This is a free country, I told you! This is not a capitalist country!

Frank: But you haven't got a job, pop. Jobs aren't free, are they?

Pop: Can't you understand, this is a free country?

Frank: But why isn't food free, and moving pictures, and a pair of skates?

Pop: You're too young to understand such things. It's a free country, now run off and play till supper time.

Frank: But pop, why do they make you work on the

road gangs for the charity relief when you're a bookkeeper?

Pop: It's the depression! It's Hoover! It's a free country! Go away!

Frank: But I'm sick of having baked beans for supper.

Pop: You'll eat them and be damned glad to have them. There's thousands of kids would be glad to have them!

Frank (brightly): I know, it's a depression, and things are getting better. But Pop, you didn't tell me yet what you mean by the word capitalism?

Pop (leaping up): Gertrude, come and take this kid out of here! He gets on my nerves with his questions! He's been picking up a lot of filthy ideas from the other kids! I wish we didn't have to live in such a neighborhood!

(Curtain, but not the end, let us hope, as we wait for the next act in the American Tragedy.)

AT A MINER'S WEDDING

Recently, I spent a week-end in a mining town in the lower anthracite region of Pennsylvania. Such a visit is always interesting to a New Yorker. Too often we forget the look and feel of these one-industry towns that are the core of industrial America.

Wall Street isn't New York, nor is New York, this city where I was born and raised, a gilded nest of sin and luxury, as Ku Klux fascists like to preach.

New York is a workers' city, where millions toil every day. It is a slum city of dirty streets and dark tenements. It is a city of hunger; more than a million people are on the relief rolls by now.

But despite its proletarian city within a city, New

York hasn't the character of a mining town. There are too many distractions here. A colliery whistle doesn't serve for the town's alarm clock, as it does in Pennsylvania. Coal doesn't crop out of the roads, or loom in great gloomy banks at the end of Main Street. You can't stand on the post office steps and see the strip miners tearing chunks of coal out of the surrounding hills.

The waitresses in the restaurants here don't talk coal with their customers; the men in saloons don't wear overalls and talk coal; you don't hear coal, coal, coal, everywhere.

Coal haunts the days and nights of these mining towns. Even the smallest kids know all about coal, and that some men are miners, and others are bosses. The class lines are sharp in these one-industry towns. And everything revolves around man's necessity for making a living, even at the danger of his life. These small towns never escape the primitive realities.

I went down in one of the mines. The companies arrange these tours for visitors as a means of advertisement. You are taken down some 1,200 feet, and walked through some of the shaft tunnels. You climb into a coal breast, and inspect the manways and chutes. You are shown a petrified tree embedded in the coal face.

You wade through pools of water. Damp sweat drops off the walls onto the miner's cap and overalls you are given to wear. You are in a long dark endless jail, alone with your lamp in a cold, wet tomb.

Steel girders have been set on cross-beams to support a roof of rock and coal. And you can see what the pressure has done to that steel; the girders have been crushed together as though they were paper. All this stone is evidently alive and dangerous.

The company puts its best foot forward, naturally. It tries to show you a clean, comfortable mine, sanitary as a Child's restaurant.

Even then you must climb on slimy steps cut in coal, in and out like a rat. Nobody can ever make a mine look like a healthy or pretty place. Some of the bourgeois women in our party chattered and tittered hysterically. It was easy to see that they were scared. They had a right to be; a mine is like a wild animal that's never been successfully tamed; anything can happen.

I went to a miner's wedding that night, at the home of a Slovak comrade. The groom was a strong, boisterous little miner of 62. He had buried three wives. The bride was a big jolly woman of 65. She had buried four husbands, three of them killed by the mine.

These Slovak miners, like most European workers, show a wonderful hospitality. When they have anything at all they want to share it with their friends. They love life, because death is always so near. They love to dance, to sing, to shout, to taste life at its lustiest.

There was an enormous bald-headed miner of about 60. There was a cleft in his skull, as it had been split by an axe. The mine had done that. He roared Slovak and Hungarian ballads all night, songs of love and death. And the bride came out of the kitchen, and stroked his bald head fondly and kissed it. Then she sang to him some song about an old man who fell in love with a young girl, and everyone rocked with laughter.

Then the groom pretended he was jealous and tore the bride away and made her dance with him, while everyone sang and clapped their hands.

The wedding had been going on for two days and nights.

Tomorrow some of the men would be down in the mines again, so now they were drinking life to the full.

"I'm twenty-five years old tonight," shouted the groom at me, "and tomorrow I'll be sixty-two. Do you understand, my friend? What the hell!"

I told a miner of my trip into the shaft. "Yes, they show you the best," he said, bitterly. "But they don't show you the way we must work. Sometimes the coal dust is so thick you can't see or breathe or think. But you must work in it. That coal breast you saw—did you think we work in such a nice cool place?

"That would be a picnic for us. Where we work it is always more than a hundred degrees. We sweat as in Turkish baths, and then go out into the chill. And there is gas, and rockfalls, and explosions. All of us have been hurt, and have seen our buddies killed. Look!"

He suddenly stripped off his shirt and undershirt and showed me his back. It was like a finely drawn map—tattooed with hundreds of small blue lines and dots. An explosion had drawn this permanent map on him. It had smashed his skull, too, and killed his buddy.

Then I looked at the other miners and saw the broken noses, cleft skulls, and tattooed faces where the coal dust had exploded. All were marked by the mine. Some of them wheezed as they talked; miner's asthma. One tall splendid Hungarian comrade told me that coal dust had settled in his lungs and the doctor feared miner's tuberculosis might follow. The host of the wedding party was a miner who had just come through an infection he had gotten at work that chilled his blood in some strange way, and made the flesh of his legs peel in great flakes.

The wedding party went on, and I enjoyed it with the rest. They laughed and sang and danced, because workers

live in a hard school, and if they are cowards, they cannot survive. Capitalism has hardened the workers. When the day of proletarian justice comes, capitalism will be amazed at the fury and courage of its executioners. It has taught them too well.

THAT MOSCOW GOLD AGAIN

Bill Green, who is head of the American Federation of Labor and never misses a single seven-course meal, has been worrying about all that gold from Moscow again.

It seems, according to a document issued by Field Marshal Green and his staff of pot-bellied generals, most of whom do their fighting in the rear at Washington and Atlantic City, and haven't been near a front-line trench of the class war in many, many moons, that Soviet recognition presents a new menace to American capitalism.

A Czarist spy named Bessedowski has informed Mr. Green that no less than $50,000,000 a year is being poured into this country by Soviet Russia to foment strikes in the steel mills, coal mines and on the college campuses. Yes, sir, all the strikes of the past year are explained by this great thinker and labor leader as being due to bribery; nothing short of bribery by Moscow.

The coal diggers and textile workers were having a wonderful time under the Blue Eagle. They were content with their wages and living conditions, and why not? Weren't they all wearing diamond stickpins and rolling around in swell Cadillacs? Didn't they always stop at first class hotels while travelling on the union's fat expense account? Didn't they have palatial homes, and servants to

cook and scrub for them? Weren't their kids going to fashionable prep schools or colleges?

Well, maybe, a few weren't making the grade, but President Green and all the other generals were sitting pretty. They were quite contented, and they assumed their army was just as pleased with everything.

And then, says Bill, those Rooshians began pouring in all that gold. Not silver or banknotes or even checks were sent in, but GOLD. It is just like these sinister Rooshians to use GOLD for such a purpose—good, old gold, which was meant for fine, idealistic capitalist purposes, and not for such dirty work. Mr. Green and people like him always seem to resent this insult to gold almost as much as they do the alleged strike-agitation which comes with it from far-off Moscow.

Anyway, it also seems that the Rooshians have sent their terrible G. P. U. men over in locust hordes. "Moscow spies are in American factories and in the trade union movement," says the frightened Bill Green. You can't always tell these spies, because they shave off their whiskers as soon as they hit Ellis Island. Mr. Green doesn't tell how many have come over, but we can assume, if they are present in enough factories and trade unions to have any effect, there must be at least thousands of these clean-shaven men around.

What do they do? According to Mr. Green and his fellow labor-generals, the American worker has no mind. When his wages are cut by the Blue Eagle stagger system, or the price of food goes up rapidly, or when he shivers on a breadline, he doesn't know what to do. He stands behind the President, as Mr. Green has tried to train him, and doesn't utter a sound of protest. Oh, no, he doesn't know how to strike or demonstrate or voice his

indignation. That all has to be taught him by agents from Moscow, who pay him well for trouble-making with that rich, red Moscow gold.

What a stupid farce all this chatter about Moscow gold has become. Bill Green, capitalist-minded as he is, knows better. He lies, and knows that he lies. This is one of the oldest and feeblest frame-up charges that capitalist propagandists have made against the Soviet Union since its first beginnings.

Raids have been made on Soviet embassies and trading corporations again and again to find documents to prove this recurrent lie, but nothing that the capitalist stools of the world could uncover has helped their case. For there is no case. The truth, as ever, is simple and plain; Moscow is busy building a Socialist state. It has made a revolution, and knows how such things are done. They never can, and never will, be done by outside intervention. You can buy, as capitalists do when they make "revolutions" in colonies, a handful of generals, statesmen and labor leaders. But who can bribe or buy the working class?

Let us recall what Lenin said to the British correspondent, Arthur Ransome, at a time early in the revolution:

"Build a high wall around England," Lenin said, in effect, "electrify this wall, surround it with armed guards, don't permit a single Russian book or newspaper or even a Russian worker to enter. We will gladly consent to this; but it will not affect by a single ha'penny the wage demands of the British worker; it will not stop for an instant the inexorable workings of the logic of capitalism, which leads it to vast crises of unemployment and war and revolution."

Moscow gold. The other day in a little New England textile town I saw how one of the organizers of the left-

wing union was forced to live. He worked long hours, and then had to eat around at some of the workers' homes. He walks 10 and 12 miles a day to save carfare; as a matter of fact, usually he has no carfare. He sleeps at various homes where there is room for him; now he is at the home of an unemployed weaver with three hungry kids who cry at night and keep the tired organizer awake.

Recently a fearless young girl, Jane Speed, one of the best organizers of I.L.D. work in the South, came on a visit to New York. She had spent two months in a filthy Alabama jail for organizing a mass meeting to protest the Scottsboro case. A Negro comrade defended her from the police; he was arrested and given six months and a $100 fine. Jane's family offered to pay her way out, but she refused because her Negro comrade had to serve his sentence. He has since then completed his six months, but still has to serve out the one hundred dollar fine at the rate of one dollar a day. They torture and persecute him; he is ill; and Jane came to New York frantically trying to raise this small sum.

I know of organizers of the Unemployment Councils who work 15 hours a day, then stand in breadlines for their grub and sleep in the municipal flophouses or the subway. All over the country one finds men and women of the working class who are glad to get a plate of beans a day, so long as it will enable them to carry on a determined fight against the monstrous system that is destroying humanity.

Moscow gold. Where is it? And if there was any, could money buy the sacrifice and passion of such masses? You may bribe a few leaders with gold but you cannot bribe a nation.

PASSION AND DEATH OF VAN GOGH

Vincent Van Gogh was one of the most passionate and interesting painters who ever lived. The first large exhibition of his work in America was recently held in New York. It was well worth studying, for Van Gogh is one of the forerunners of proletarian painting, just as Moussorgsky is of our music, and Walt Whitman of our poetry. Van Gogh belongs to us, and not to the bourgeois art fanciers.

He was a martyr and genius, one of those over-sensitive people whose hearts break over the huge misery of the workers under capitalism.

A writer in the New York *Times* estimates that Van Gogh's paintings now are worth more than ten million dollars. Yet during his life-time Van Gogh was able to sell only one canvas, to the sister of a fellow Dutch artist, for eighty dollars.

That is all he was able to earn during his life of painting, ten feverish years in which he produced 829 drawings and 741 oil paintings!

All of eighty dollars; no wonder the man finally went mad, and died at the age of thirty-seven. That is how capitalism has always treated its geniuses; it starves and drives them mad during their lives, then glorifies them, romanticizes them, exploits them commercially after they have miserably died.

Some of our revolutionary artists bring no personal passion to their work. They are revolutionists with their heads, and not with their hearts. No great art ever comes out of mere rationalizing. It is something that must also

arise out of the unconscious; be as primitive and real as the hatred a worker feels for a scab.

Revolutionary theories of art must be discussed and digested. We must know where we are going. But the artist who does not have a direct contact with humanity, and who does not feel the daily struggle intensely, will never create revolutionary art. He has merely exchanged a white ivory tower for a red one.

Van Gogh never lived in this ivory tower. He lived among the Belgian miners in the Borinage region.

"He found the miners shivering in wind-swept huts, stricken with black fever, unable to earn enough to buy warm clothes or keep their family in bread," writes Irving Stone. "Van Gogh worked as a nurse among the sick and dying. He gave his clothing to the children. He spent the fifty francs a month his father sent him for medicine for the stricken ones. He gave up his warm, comfortable room above the bakery to live in one of the most miserable shacks in the region. He became known among the miners as the Christ-man."

But at the end of a year of this, a committee of ministers visited him to see whether he deserved support for his mission among the miners. They were horrified to find him in his shack, lying on a sack of straw and covered with burlap. He was holding services for forty miners killed in an explosion the day before.

"The committee was so horrified by his 'return to barbarism' that they expelled him from the church.' "

Van Gogh was the son of a minister. He was no Communist, but a Christian Socialist who really happened to believe in Christianity and Socialism.

It was among the suffering miners that he first began to paint. They moved him to it: he had never painted

before. He felt their lot so keenly that he was compelled to portray it in art.

In short, Van Gogh was an agitator. And I wish that all our artists, musicians and writers could learn from this Christian how to feel.

The sophisticates of the New Yorker school have ruined many of our people, who are ashamed to show their rage, pity, love and hatred in the face of all the monumental capitalist horror.

Van Gogh's friends told him he had no technique. His only teacher, Anton Mauve, told Van Gogh he did not know how to draw, he was clumsy and amateurish, and that no teacher could waste time on a man who showed so little aptitude for painting.

But Van Gogh had something greater than technique—it was this passion for humanity. This was the fiery revolutionary dynamo that drove him on. He once said he wanted to paint "humanity, humanity and more humanity."

Yes, we can learn a great deal from Christian Socialists like Van Gogh—their pure, direct response to the life of the masses is something no revolutionary artist dares ever lose.

NIGHT IN A HOOVERVILLE

The nation that year was covered with these miserable colonies of the men without jobs. Here it was in New York, too; the familiar landscape again, a garbage dump and shacks by a river.

It smelled, like the others, of urine and melancholy. A great white moon blazed on the tin-roofed shacks. The

sour earth was choked with tomato cans, rotten rags and newspapers and old bedsprings. A prowling tom-cat sniffed at the fantastic skeleton of a dressmaker's model. The moon glittered on a black abandoned boiler. On the river, hung with red and green lamps in the velvet dark, a passing tugboat puffed and moaned.

The tall kid from Iowa had been bumped around in boxcars for three days and nights. When he arrived in New York he was too tired to care where he slept; a cinderpile under the stars was good enough.

So he had found the shantytown, and now was hunting in the moonlit garbage for his bed. He found a woman's society magazine, slimy with the muck. He brushed it clean and stuck it for a chest protecter under his khaki shirt. Then he discovered a tin can once used for motor oil; it would make a fine pillow. Then he made the real find; an old soggy mattress, heavy with months of heavenly tears.

Some local Mark Twain had nailed up a signpost reading "Headache Boulevard." In a nearby mound of gravel and coke clinkers the boy lay down, pulling the mattress over him for warmth.

The night was frosty, flashing with hard bright clarity like a crystal. Up there, in the blue and silver firmament, loomed the strange skyscrapers of New York. It was Walt's first visit to this city, this dangerous magnet of all the youth of America. He meant to explore New York tomorrow. Now he wanted to sleep.

But a drunk party was going on in one of the shacks. Men were howling and singing. A gang of demons, they shrieked like murder, and it was really impossible to sleep.

Walt found himself remembering. That night, for instance, at the Salvation Army flophouse, where on the walls a poster announced in big red and white letters:

"God Answers Your Prayer." And Al Kruger the clown had asked the prissy little clerk if God would also answer one's prayer for a chocolate malted milk. Then socko! the two boys found themselves slugged and kicked out on the street for this wisecrack.

That was Louisville, Kentucky. Next night in the jungles the old hoboes got drunk on corn and ganged up on the kids there. Davenport, Iowa, how long ago that seemed. Poor Dad, what was he doing now? But to hell with Davenport! And Toledo, Ohio! "Us boys do hunt for work, Your Honor. We ain't just bums." But the judge vagged them just the same.

Walt had once started to learn the saxophone. The exercises tootled through his head. And then the devils got to howling again; it was in the end shack. But the moon was strong as opium, it hypnotized him like a crystal ball. The flowing river gleamed with the white magic, and the Iowa kid was asleep.

But in McMurra's shack they went on howling. They had finished three pints of "smoke," the alcohol sold in Bowery paint stores in cans labeled "Poison."

McMurra, once a solid Gael and self-respecting family man, was quite insane now with the drink. Under a wild, black mat of hair his eyes glittered red like evil jewels. He was "mayor" of this shantytown and the other men were his henchmen. They always quarreled at their orgies.

Budke pushed his long hollow face like a snake at McMurra and sneered through yellow teeth. "Every day in the trenches we used to bump off rats like you! Officers and all!" And Short Line Casey, who'd worked on section gangs, jumped and flapped his arms exactly like a holy roller. His bald head was inflamed as though with prickly heat, he couldn't focus his eyes. Monotonously he shrieked:

"What did yuh do wit' dat four dollars last Chuesday? Dat four dollars?"

Incredibly enough, Tammany politics were played in this shanty town. Like all such gangs, this one never failed to quarrel over the miserable loot. Foul and hot, the room was suffocating as a sewer. It stank of burning kerosene, rusty iron and old putrid clothing and underwear. McMurra, like many others, bartered in junk. An anchor lay in a corner. Bundles of tinfoil and pulp magazines rotted under the bed.

This was about the foulest shack in the colony. The floor was thick with a carpet of cigarette butts, sputum and potato peelings. The ceiling had been varnished a cockroach brown by months of cooking grease and tobacco. Al Smith's smiling face was pasted on a wall, the room's only decoration other than cobwebs.

McMurra glared about him in the lamplight. His brow wrinkled like a puzzled gorilla's. His neck muscles seemed ready to crack. With lifted fists like hickory clubs he advanced on the shrieking little Casey to destroy him.

But old lean Pat O'Hara moodily smacked a chair over the Mayor's skull. Then followed an orgy of battle, the mingled scream of butchered fowl and the roaring of trapped bulls. Then all the henchmen formed a united front and threw their Mayor out of his own shack.

It woke the kid from Iowa. He yawned sleepily as he heard them. He saw McMurra flung out in a twisted somersault, landing heavily on his face.

It looked like murder. The man lay still, then lifted himself painfully. Sobbing and groaning, he crawled like a wounded animal to the river bank. There, his face a bleeding steak, he rested on hands and knees, his open muzzle gasping for air.

Fascinated, the kid watched him. The melancholy gorilla-man studied the river and its marvelous silver sparkle. It oppressed him with a mysterious heartbreak. He was being tortured. Throwing back his shaggy wild mane, the gorilla howled to the moon.

"Arfa maroo!" he wailed. There was no reason in it that Walt could find. The words meant nothing but the anguish seemed real. "Arfa! Arfa maroo!"

Against his own better judgment, Walt moved slowly to help the wounded man. The kid had learned never to interfere. You got into trouble that way. But maybe the man was dying; his tragic cry was certainly a call for help. Primitive and strange, it could not be resisted.

McMurra saw him coming, and slowly, too, he arose and waited. And then Walt caught the gleam in the madman's eye, and in a spasm of regret, knew his mistake.

He started to run, but it was too late. Dripping blood and foam, like a baited bull, McMurra charged the boy. He slugged and kicked, his thick arms rose and fell. The kid fought back, but was no match for the solid madman. He screamed, but nobody heard him; none came to help.

This was the city of the men without jobs. This was the home of the defeated. In the melancholy shacks men drugged themselves with checkers and booze. Others snored. A textile worker looked at a breadknife and thought of suicide. A carpenter lay in a lousy burlap bed and read stories of optimism in a magazine. Subway diggers dreamed of Italy. A Finn ground his broad sailor's knife.

Arfa maroo! The kid was finally battered into unconsciousness. He sprawled like a corpse in the garbage. Arfa! howled the whiskey-ape to the moon. There was no reason in it all. Maroo! Imperial city of New York! Maroo us!

Hunger, horror and holy ghost! Maroo, maroo! Arfa maroo!

FOR A NEW WORLD FAIR

THE officials of New York are all in a dither. It seems that a world's fair is being planned for our noisy, overcrowded, neurotic city in 1939-40.

This is years away. We may all be bombed out of existence by then; haven't the city fathers heard the big guns on the horizon, presaging a new world war?

Or maybe we'll all have starved to death meanwhile in the capitalist famine. Don't the officials know people are starving in New York, or do they eat so regularly they can't even imagine such a thing?

Anyway, the stuffed shirts are all in a twitter of optimism, oratory and plans for the big fair in 1940. A site has been chosen on Flushing Bay, and the swamps will soon be filled in. Millions of dollars will be poured into that swamp. It will mean prosperity, is the given reason; just as the Max Baer-Joe Louis million-dollar gate was said by the grave and learned economists of capitalism to have been a signal for the return of the American boom.

I like fairs, I like Coney Island, parades, circuses, any kind of a good show. But I like the truth a whole lot better, and I can sense in advance that our New York fair, if we are still alive to put it through, will be one of the typical gaudy lies of a capitalist world.

These fairs are supposed to be a concentrated picture of the state of civilization, a sample of its scientific and artistic glories.

The Chicago fair, as you may remember, had a model

Ford plant shown in action, and a gallery of fine paintings, and scads of modern inventions, and lagoons like Venice. It also had a midway that concentrated a hundred Coney Island freak shows and circuses.

But there wasn't a single realistic reproduction of a typical Southern lynching shown at the fair, to illustrate American justice and mercy and the race question.

There was a great deal of dazzling modern architecture, but not a single drab, rotten, bug-crawling tenement house, such as those in which many millions of good Americans must live.

There was no attempt to show how coal miners must sweat in terrific underground heat and gas, for a lousy wage. There were exhibits of paintings, but not a single farm mortgage in a beautiful frame, or the photograph of a poor farmer and his family being kicked off their own homestead by a prosperous banking shark from the city.

I could make many suggestions as to exhibits for the New York fair.

I should like to see a reproduction of the municipal flophouse, for example, with hundreds of sick and hungry men groaning in the dark, and scratching after bugs all night.

A sweatshop at work would make a nice inspiring scene, too. Pale men and women humped over machines, and driving themselves furiously to earn seven or eight dollars a week, slaving from dawn to dark to keep their families alive.

Or a Home Relief station, with broken-spirited unemployed being third-degreed by some haughty snip of a college girl, their private lives pried into as though they were criminals. This would make a beautiful sample of America and New York today.

Or why not, also, for comedy relief, have the reproduc-

tion of a Tammany club, and show how democracy works in New York one hundred and fifty years after the revolution to make America safe for democracy? Those Tammany mugs are splendid actors, Mr. Mayor, and would put on a good show that should teach every child how elections are really won, and what a great thing it is to be a citizen with a two-dollar vote.

But why indulge in foolish hopes that even a tiny slice of truth will be found at this new World's Fair? Mademoiselle La Truth is the most unpopular person you can ever find in every capitalist land. The stuffed shirts of capitalism hate her; they call her an agitator, a kill-joy, trouble-maker, a pessimist, a Bolshevik. They arrest her on sight; they send gangs of vigilantes after her; they defame her in the newspapers and colleges and churches; they slap her into jails and concentration camps, and throw away the key.

If she comes near the World's Fair, a hundred trained dicks will be there to spot her, and to haul her off to the can, before she can make trouble.

But can't we persuade our mayor, formerly a valiant liberal, to let her slip in for just a moment? Can't we effect some sort of "liberal" compromise? We know that too much truth at the fair would hurt business and discourage free spending, but why not have in some dark, forgotten corner just one or two truthful exhibits? If even for the aesthetic effect of contrast, if only for the record.

American boys in a military training camp, being taught how to shove their bayonets into the flesh and bone of an enemy soldier (Japanese? British? Soviet Russian? Mexican? or maybe only a striking coal miner?)

Or a group of New York kids who've never had a square meal in their lives. A fourth of the school kids are chroni-

cally undernourished, a commission of doctors reported recently. We could have a fine delicatessen store window, such as those one sees uptown, and the kids standing in front of it, mournfully.

It would be a very touching sight. Pathos, and all that, Mr. Mayor. A contrast to all the gargantuan optimism that will swell the fair. Contrast is the very basis of good art, Mr. Mayor, and the fair "will be a work of art," your officials promise us, if not of truth.

SORROWS OF A SCAB

Pearl Serper, a refined young lady scab of the Bronx, is having plenty of trouble, these days. Nobody likes Pearl any more because she is a scab. Her pals are deserting her, her boy-friends are giving her the gate. She feels like a skunk and outcast, and it's the fault of the strikers in her department store. The United States Government, she thinks, ought to step in and do something to protect its loyal scabs.

Pearl confessed it all in a heart-breaking affidavit which her boss's slick lawyers have made the basis for an injunction against a union strike of sales people in the Fried Department Store.

Pearl may be really sore about this new snobbery and prejudice that the young Bronxites employ against her. Maybe she can't see why scabbing is wrong, and why everybody hates her. Maybe she has seen too many movies where the boss marries the salesgirl, and they live happily afterward, and she thinks being a scab will land her a boss-husband, with lots of jack.

But maybe they just forced her to sign this affidavit.

Maybe those slick lawyers talked her into it, and it was all made up in their clever, double-crossing rat minds.

Whatever the circumstances, her affidavit is one of those interesting documents that throw a flashlight on society today, and that ought to go into the permanent archives of the Museum of Social Change at Commonwealth College, for future historians to use. Even if the lawyers invented the story, it is interesting as an exhibit to show what sort of stories such lawyers thought plausible and useful to invent these days.

Pearl is made out to confess in her affidavit, the following pathetic facts:

"I have attempted to explain (to my friends) that the strike is merely an attempt to force us to join a union that can give us no benefits. However, the constant presence of picketing and the cry of strike is hard to explain away. As a natural result, my social contacts have dwindled. . . ."

(Note that phrase; as a natural result. What a wonderful place the Bronx must be. You go scabbing, and "as a natural result," everyone turns against you. The affidavit mentions this very casually, but what a picture it brings up of a land flowing with milk and honey and class consciousness. Let us try to Bronxify the rest of America, so that as "a natural result" every scab will find his or her "social contacts dwindling." Yes, this affidavit should be an inspiration to us all.)

"As a natural result," says the affidavit, "my social contacts are dwindling: even where there had been close friendship before, the attitude of my acquaintances has cooled toward me.

"Opportunities to meet people socially are denied me. The likelihood of meeting men and women of my social

set has been diminished. It, of course, follows that meeting eligible young men who possibly might become interested in me as a lifetime companion is more difficult."

Scabbing, it seems, is worse for a young girl in the Bronx than to be reeking with the body odor the Listerine, Life Buoy and other quack ads warn against. Pearl is afraid she will never grab herself a Bronx boy and push a baby carriage with the millions of other proud Bronx mammas who create those baby-carriage traffic jams every morning on the Grand Concourse. Ah, the tragedy of being a scab! It makes one sad enough to go out and drink a dozen beers in sympathy, or change a baby's diapers.

Pearl's tragedy must have busted the big fascist heart of Supreme Court Justice Cotillo. Immediately, with tears running down his face, he walloped the union with an injunction against picketing. He saved little Pearl of the Bronx from the fate worse than death. He made an honest woman of her by smashing the strike.

The good Judge is a loyal ward-heeler of Mussolini in this country. Most judges would have asked the boss-lawyers for something more substantial than such an affidavit, but it was enough for this old hand at the game. But the union is fighting on, an injunction can never stop the American people from getting their rights.

I would like to say a few words to young and naive workers who may find themselves in the same spot as Pearl.

Whether her affidavit is faked or not, it contains a great deal of underlying truth.

Don't scab, whatever the circumstances, or whatever the boss promises you.

It may be difficult for you to understand just what benefits a labor union will bring you. It takes a little experience in life to see that.

You may think that the other workers have never cared about you, so why should you care about them? You may fool yourself with the idea that you can take care of yourself, so let others look out for themselves, too, and leave you alone. You may need the money badly, and fail to see what good a strike does.

You may have a thousand such reasons that seem to justify scabbing. It may seem only a simple thing, a temporary thing. You may be sore, and wonder why a union should dictate to you; you may insist on your right of free choice.

All these arguments will be put in your mind, also, by the boss. He will flatter you, he will promise you a raise in pay, a permanent job, a foreman's sinecure, and what-not.

In these circumstances all bosses do this, and they are always lying. The strike will be over one day, it may be won or lost, but you will find the boss never keeps his promise. He will forget all about you; you were just one of his cheap tools. But the workers will never forget that you betrayed them. It is with them that you will have to go on working side by side, and how will they be able to forget that you betrayed them?

Bosses only marry their salesgirls on the screen, not in life. Give up these pipe dreams, and come down to earth. You are fated to live in the workers' world, and in that world scabbing is the one great sin. If you have committed this sin, it may follow you all your days. Amongst workers, the suspicion that someone has been a scab rouses immediate disgust and hostility.

Don't scab. Even your children may curse you for it. For the whole world will one day shake off these greedy bosses and their Pearls and Cotillos who have kept us

in hunger and war. A scab is a traitor to the future of himself and the world.

IN A HOME RELIEF STATION

THE line is long and extends from the staircase at the end of the school courtyard to the door at the entrance. There must be at least two hundred people in the line at a time. And more come in. Every minute new ones come in. They pour through the door at the entrance where there are four big cops and a special dick with a badge on his coat lapel. Inside there are two more big cops. They seem to pick the biggest cops in the precinct for the job. You never can tell what may happen here. There are two lines like that. Two hundred workers at least in each line. Backed up against the tiled wall. Single file. Four hundred people. Waiting. Waiting for hours. Waiting until everything aches with waiting. Feet and back and shoulders. Waiting and standing up for hours. No benches. Or just one. The bench that holds four at a time in front of the interviewer's table. That's where you hand in your application slip. That's where they check up on you. Four at a time. It takes hours. And you stand and wait. Wait. Until everything aches. Feet and back and shoulders.

That's why you can never tell what may happen. That's why every ten minutes the police car comes driving around to the Home Relief Bureau. That's why there are so many cops. In case all these poor and jobless and hungry people got tired of waiting? In case they got tired and desperate standing up against the walls for hours, while the thin long line creeps forward a bare inch, an imperceptible shove at a time? In case they used those hands, toughened

and hard as iron with countless years of labor, now hanging at their sides, to take over the management of this relief station? What then? They would destroy this line. There wouldn't be any standing for hours then. They'd give themselves the relief they need because each knows the need of the other. That's why you never can tell what may happen. That's why there are so many cops and every ten minutes the police car comes driving around.

It happened once before here. They lost their temper once. They got tired of standing and answering stupid questions. They were hungry and they wanted relief. It began with a woman, a big brawny Swedish woman. For hours she had been standing in line. If you've never been on a line in the Home Relief Bureau you don't know what it is. You don't know the feeling you get standing there, hour after hour, like an animal, like a dog waiting to be fed. Nobody talks. Nobody says anything. You just stand. Somebody asks a question. What do they ask you? How much relief do you get? Somebody tells you how tough he's been having it. How long he's been out of work. How they're going to be put out if something isn't done soon.

The city has set up these Home Relief Bureaus. They had to set them up. Everybody knows that. They had to set them up. But they made it as difficult as possible to get relief. It is given grudgingly, and wound around with yards and yards of red tape. And they herd you like dogs there. Beggars ain't choosers. Workers ain't human. They don't deserve better. Courtesy? Why, you ought to be glad they don't let you die in the streets. You ought to be glad they don't let you freeze to death in the winter. You ought to go down on your knees and thank the big shot that his heart is big and his liver is red and his pocket is full. Thank him for the check that can't support one person

decently, no less a family of four. Thank him for the rent that pays for two rooms in which five people are crowded. This is relief.

This is what the big brawny Swedish woman got tired of. Suddenly, she walked out of line, just walked right out, and plunked herself down in the chair of the interviewer. In the interviewer's chair! The staff of the Home Relief Bureau must have had a fit. Imagine, having the nerve to sit down in a chair! But she sat there, the big woman, folding her hands deliberately across her broad breast and waited. For a moment the big fat cop, the ugly one, just stood and stared at her. Then he asked her to get back in line. She refused. She said she was sick and tired of standing up there. She had children to attend to. She had a home to take care of. Hadn't she worked and slaved long enough? Did she have to come crawling on her hands and knees to get a piece of bread from the city? Was it her fault her husband was out of work? She wanted to be taken care of. She refused to stand any longer in that line that moved forward an inch at a time. If they were shorthanded why didn't they hire more people? They took the people's money through taxes, why didn't they use it to help the people instead of grafting it?

The cop said: "You gotta get up or get out." But he forgot something. He forgot that four hundred people standing on line there felt just as the big brawny Swedish woman felt. He forgot that her words were the words of all, her thoughts were the thoughts of all. He thought he was dealing with one woman, but he was facing four hundred people who had suffered as she had and felt as she did.

She refused to leave the chair. The cop moved over to grab her arm. And then it happened. It looked as though he had grabbed the arm of four hundred people so quickly

did those two long lines move. It looked as though there was only one voice shouting. Let me alone! so quickly did the four hundred other workers move.

And before it was over, they had not one police car sirening through the streets, but half a dozen. It looked as though they had called out all the cops in the city. But nobody was arrested, except a member of the Unemployment Council in the district whom the cops had been trying to grab for some time. He wasn't even there. But many times he had been in the line, talking, explaining the need for organizing. The cops picked him up but it was like arresting a thunderstorm. It was something that was in the minds of those four hundred people and in the minds of millions of other workers scattered throughout the land. It was the thoughts which poured out of the mouth of the big brawny woman who walked out of the line and plunked down in the interviewer's chair.

This is only a slight instance. A brief little episode in the class struggle. But it flares up in the great battles of the workers in great strikes. It will flare up in the great struggles coming. This time it was only about a chair. An interviewer's chair. The papers called it a "riot." Some day it will be not for a chair in a Home Relief Bureau but for a government. And there will be not four hundred, but millions.

THEY REFUSE TO SHARE THE GUILT

Corliss Lamont made an interesting talk at a banquet of the Friends of the Soviet Union the other night. He

is a real friend of the Soviet Union, as has been proved now for some years.

This particular Lamont is the son of Wall Street and J. P. Morgan's Thomas Lamont, which may seem strange to some, but isn't strange to those who have studied history.

More than sixty years ago the great Russian novelist Turgenev wrote a novel titled, *Fathers and Sons*, in which he showed how the two worlds, capitalist and communist, fought their battle everywhere, even in the minds and hearts of families who loved each other personally.

The father was fated to play a certain role, but history had laid another task on the son, from which he could not honorably escape. And thus the two, despite the strong natural tie of blood, were in opposite camps.

There are workers, degraded by capitalism, slum-proletariat, we call them, who betray their brothers and join the vigilante and Nazi groups that destroy workers. There are also a group among the capitalists who desert their class, because they see clearly that it can no longer administer the world, but has been forced to cruelty and chicanery as a substitute for superior brains and usefulness.

Corliss Lamont has been forced into revolutionary sympathies by an iron logic. At one time an instructor in philosophy at Columbia, Marxism has been for him a series of slow and painfully-hammered out advances in thinking. It has not been a piece of irresponsible emotionalism with him or the romantic rebellion of one generation against its elders. Corliss Lamont, though a rich man's son, happens to have a cool and first-rate mind, as one can see by examining his books and other writings.

And, let me repeat, there are innumerable such examples

in world history. The chief financial contributor to the work of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party was a Russian millionaire named Morozov. In the Soviet Union today there are hundreds of descendants of the old nobility who occupy high positions in the Communist movement.

I can remember meeting the poet Lugovskoi in Moscow. He is a powerful, handsome young giant who fought in the Red Army through the Civil War, and now is one of the best known of the Soviet poets, a member of the party. This Lugovskoi is the last heir of the Ruriks, who were the Czars of Russia before the Romanov dynasty muscled in. And nobody in Moscow finds it strange, or even gives it a second thought.

At the banquet the other night there spoke, also, a former Czarist General, Victor A. Yakhontoff. This ex-general has gone through a long and sincere development, too. Formerly attached to the Czarist Embassy in Japan, he has written authoritative and scholarly works on the war scheme of the Japanese imperialists in the far east. He exposes the steps they are taking in their monstrous strategy to conquer the whole of Asia for their empire. They are leading up to a war against the Soviet Union, and in that war, if and when it comes, General Yakhontoff will be a valiant and loyal fighter on the side of the Soviets.

This cannot be doubted. The general spoke at the recent congress against war and fascism in Chicago. In all his writings and lectures he is tireless in defense of his new world philosophy. Yes, this general has deserted his own class forever and come over to the working class.

It is happening, I repeat, in every land under the sun of our day. About a year ago in Japan there was a general police round-up of Communists, of the brutal variety we have seen recently in California. The Japanese

newspapers were surprised to find that among those caught in the dragnet were members of some of the oldest aristocratic families of Japan, including the grandson of a former Premier.

There are quite a few aristocrats in the Communist Party of Germany, too. Ludwig Renn, the famous Communist author who served three years in one of Hitler's death-camps, comes of an ancient Teutonic stock, and is loved by every German worker.

In France we have seen the recent conversion to Communism of a large group of aristocratic intellectuals, including such famous names as those of André Gide and André Malraux.

In every land the best of what is left in the old bourgeois world reaches this point where it can no longer share the guilt of capitalism. Not one first-class mind in Germany has remained with Hitler. Art and science flourish in the Soviet Union; in the fascist lands they have withered like a tree struck by lightning.

In America we are seeing the same process. Never was there a time when so many writers and professional people are beginning to understand that fascism means more than the destruction of the working class; it is also the end of western civilization, whereas Communism is the only force that can and will carry on the great tradition.

CAN A SUBWAY BE BEAUTIFUL?

"So they built a subway, so what? What's a subway to get so excited about? I've been riding in a subway all my life and you don't see me firing salute guns for joy. Gimme

a horse and buggy, or a model-T and I'll trade you the I. R. T. for it any time."

That's what a great many city people accustomed to kicking in their hard-earned nickels to swell the coffers of the utility companies, must have felt reading the reports in their morning paper of the completion of the great new underground system in Moscow.

What's there to get so excited about? There in Moscow they were celebrating the event like a festival. One hundred and fifty thousand workers on the day the subway was open to exhibition to the public were given free passes to test the new transportation. They came to the kiosks and descended into the caverns thousands of iron-workers, diggers, sand-hogs, engineers had blasted, excavated, welded, and tracked. Women came with shawls around their heads and babies in their arms. Old greybeards who remembered a droshky better than a trolley car. Kids riding up and down the escalators for a lark.

They stood on the platform and for the first time in Russia's history and in their own lives they heard the great mechanical horse come roaring out of the dark tubes, glaring with headlights, hissing with pneumatic brakes. What were their thoughts when the ground began to sing with the thunder of the express? Why was there such jubilation at the sight of the automatic doors sliding back on their oiled grooves? At the great dark smooth flanks of the trains?

It would be just another train to a New Yorker perhaps. Not his at all, something the I. R. T. built and was going to run for the profit of the shareholders. The city didn't pour out en masse when the new Eighth Avenue system was completed. It had nothing to do with people personally, except perhaps making it slightly easier for some-

body to get over to his sweatshop on Ninth Avenue in time to punch a timeclock.

But the Soviet workers heard more than the thunder of the first express, saw more than glaring bright headlights, knew something greater was happening than the construction of an underground system of transportation.

That express rushing out of the darkness of the tunnel was a locomotive of the future. An express of Socialism. Its engines were throbbing with a different purpose. The open throttle was the speed with which the new life of the Russian masses was being built.

"We will build the most beautiful subway in the world," said Kaganovich, while the pneumatic hammers were still drilling in the earth.

And the subway is beautiful, strangely enough, to those of us who cannot think of subways and beauty sleeping in the same tunnel.

The stations are broad platforms with great lofty ceilings. The walls and the pillars are sheathed with marble of various colors from the Ural Mountains. Broad staircases with marble balustrades lead to the street. And on the walls are great mosaics showing the workers building the subway. No two stations are alike in design and even the ornamental lighting fixtures are different in each station.

The workers of the Soviet Union are proud of their new subway as they are proud of their tractors, their automobiles, their factories and skyscrapers they have built with their own hands and for their own use. Just as they conquered the desert that was once Stalingrad, or the waters of the Dnieper to build Dnieperstroy, so they have conquered the treacherous quicksand that underlies Moscow to build their rapid transit, their own interborough.

Blast furnaces, hydro-electric stations, conveyor-made tractors, and now escalators, automatic doors, and underground trains—on these commonplace industrial miracles, the miracle of a Socialist society is being firmly reared.

HOMAGE TO AN OLD HOUSE PAINTER

The memory of an old Yankee house painter I once knew in Boston will always remain with me. His name was Eugene Hough. He had been active in the Chicago eight-hour day movement which culminated in the Haymarket affair, and in the martyrdom of men of labor.

Eugene had worked beside Albert Parsons and the other fine men who were hanged. I was fascinated by his reminiscences of the period; he knew how to tell the story. He had been active in the labor movement ever since; and when I knew him, Gene was past seventy, and a left-wing Socialist who still did a great deal of Jimmy Higgins work for the movement.

His wife, I believe, had died some twenty years back. Old Gene lived alone in a furnished room house. He was neat, precise and careful, both in words and action, with that technical grace and economy of effort that good artists and good workers always have.

He had a fine, dry Yankee sense of humor, too; and knew how to teach me, a muddled young radical, needing lessons in revolutionary reality, without any of that harsh pedantry that is so offensive.

You could not help loving this witty, loyal, militant old

proletarian. The best teachers are not always found in colleges; Eugene Hough certainly was a teacher I would not have found there.

I suppose I was too young then to realize that this man of seventy was having no easy time of it. Every day he was out making a living; climbing ladders and slinging paint in competition with the young and hale. House painting is a strenuous job, and in the American building trades there has always been a terrific speed-up.

But old Gene worked at his trade, supported himself by it, and even had energy and enthusiasm left at night to play a role in his trade union, to assist at street meetings, to help organize study classes, to read every good revolutionary novel and pamphlet, and then peddle them. He had time and patience to nurse young gropers like myself along. He never complained, he worked at his trade through the terrible summers and wild winters of New England.

His best friend was Louise Adams Floyd, who had organized the School of Social Science in Boston, at the time one of the first workers' schools in America. This comrade, now living in New York, showed me recently a batch of letters she had received from our friend Gene.

It seems that as he neared his seventy-fifth year, his physical powers at last ebbed, and he could no longer work. She assisted him with money. He had never asked for it; but he accepted it, as one should from a friend, with dignity and friendship.

Then something worse befell him than his loss of independence through work. Gene began to lose his eyesight. The old man's letters at this time are beautiful in their simple stoicism, in which one can feel the heroic spirit of

the working class, a heroism that is unconscious of itself, and contains no bombast.

But then there came three or four long letters, written at intervals of about a month. They were quaint and almost stilted messages, in which the old man told his comrade how much her friendship and help had meant to him, and how good life had been, and what a beautiful future lay before the human race under Socialism.

They were letters of farewell, though the word was not once mentioned. An old proletarian was saying good-bye to his world, quietly, affectionately, fearlessly.

Comrade Floyd knew that something was wrong. She thought our old friend must be very ill, and would not tell her that he believed himself to be dying. She wired him. A long serene letter came back in the next mail. This time old Gene asked her to understand that when the time comes that a worker is a burden to himself and others, he ought to do the social thing and relieve his friends of the burden.

A day later she received the news that Comrade Hough had committed suicide.

Men who have led good lives live on in the memories of their friends. Eugene Hough is part of me, and I never forget him. But I happen to be writing about him on the birthday of John D. Rockefeller and the papers are filled with sycophantic tales of how he is spending his old age.

In his time, this man was a business pirate. The books of Ida Tarbell and others tell the bloody record. Scores of small businessmen were murdered by Standard Oil in its frenzy for monopolistic profit.

Money, profit, at the cost of human life and suffering has been all that one can truthfully write about the life of John D. Rockefeller. This greedy old octopus has contributed nothing to the human race; in the history of man-

kind he will be remembered like Nero, cancer and tuberculosis—one of the diseases that almost destroyed man in his infancy.

The withered old parasite has reached the age of ninety-five. Nobody really gives a damn whether he lives or dies, he has no friends except his pious profiteer of a son. But the mean old miser who once was so greedy for gold, now is greedy of mere life. He wants to drool on until he is a hundred. That is the only thought that stirs in his crafty senile brain.

And so he is constantly attended by several male nurses. A doctor waits on him constantly, too. When he sneezes specialists are brought in. He is muffled and guarded like a sacred treasure. All the floors of his home are thickly carpeted, the newspapers report, so that he will not catch cold. He takes his drives only in a closed sedan. A score of flunkies follow him everywhere.

He lives in Florida in the winter. An elevator has been installed in his home, so that he doesn't have to walk up to the second floor. His food is prepared by specialists, his chamber pot supervised, no doubt, by some learned surgeon from Johns Hopkins or the Mayo Clinic.

The papers report all this uncritically, and with a certain fondness. But they never tell us of the millions of old workers like Eugene Hough, who must die like worn-out horses in lonely furnished rooms.

THE WORLD OF DREAMS

You climb up to the gallery and look for a seat. It's about eight o'clock. Just after supper, just after work. In the darkness thousands of pale faces slanting, watching

the show with the eyes of sleepwalkers or hypnotics. Thousands of faces. Old men who fall asleep, their heads nodding into their chests. Housewives running away from the dishes and the kitchen and the children and worries about rent and food, trying to forget for a few hours in the movies. High up in the dark topmost seats the girls leaning their heads on the shoulders, touching each other secretly in the darkness, but watching the film. Kids chewing gum as fast as the reels unfold.

All workers here, with their own lives, the lives of the shops and the offices and the factories and the streets and the tenements. Silent in the darkness. Watching the immense eight-foot heads, the trained movie-voices of the stars, spectators of a glamorous and unreal world. Here are magnificent boudoirs, swift, expensive roadsters, gowns like silver skins on the sleek powdered bodies of beautiful women selected as carefully as you select diamonds in Tiffany's.

It's a dream world, where everything comes out all right in the end. It's a world that makes myths, that creates heroes, that manufactures heart-rending tragedies and rip-roaring comedies. It's a huge factory where the human emotions are manufactured. Tears, sighs, longings, desires, successes, are turned out as you assemble a Ford in the Detroit plants. Like a huge belt, Hollywood has divided its workers like the workers on a conveyor. This one screws on the nut of tragedy; this one monkey-wrenches on the dialogue of people; this one tacks down the upholstery of love; this one fixes the steering wheel of the plot; this one screws on the horn of laughter. And when the parts and bearings are assembled, you have the complete machine of a picture, ready to be shipped out to

the most remote villages of America to make people laugh, weep, sigh, on consignment.

You sit there in the darkness. All around you are workers, people with tired faces trying to forget. What are they trying to forget? Reality. Their own lives. For a few hours they want to live the lives of others, simpler, magical lives, to be illusioned, to feel that in spite of all their sufferings life will come out all right for them in the end. They want to wed the heiress in the last scene, feel they are kissed by the hero in the final closeup, be shot at, imprisoned, persecuted and come out of it without harm and with the garlands of victory.

What picture are you seeing? She is beautiful and young and wants to become a star in Hollywood. Thousands of girls want the same. The director of the show is handsome and talks a mile a minute. He's up-to-date. Slang rolls from his mouth like gunfire. He has all the new gags of the gagmen at his fingertips. He has all the new dance steps of the dancing teachers in his toes. He wears the best suits in town. The girls are dippy about him. He's dippy about the young beautiful girl who wants to become an actress in Hollywood. But he doesn't let on. Neither does she. They fight. And ten thousand girls and fellows of America smile; it's just like what happens with themselves.

And then the frame-up. Somebody is out to stop the production of the picture. Somebody is out to throw the monkey-wrench in the works. Somebody always has to be the villain. Will he conquer? Will he triumph? Will he defeat the enemy, overthrow the gangsters, beat the frame-up? Ten thousand, no, a million, people are asking themselves that. They also have enemies, they also are the victims of frame-ups.

And sure enough, he conquers in the end. He defeats the

gangsters, and completes the film and clasps the lovely, beautiful young girl, who has been selected as carefully as a diamond from Tiffany's, in his fivefoot long arms and bends his eight-foot head in a kiss three feet wide for ten minutes.

And everybody feels satisfied, for truth has won once more, honesty has brought its own reward, the good has conquered, evil has been defeated.

But what of our own lives? What of us, the ten millions who day in and day out pay our admission fees into the house of dreams?

Have we won our struggle? Have we defeated the enemy yet? Who is the villain in the plot of our lives?

We envy the millionaire. But Hollywood makes us pity him. Look, he too suffers. Look, he has children who have left him in his old age. Our children have also left us. They have run away from home. They had no jobs. They did not want to hang around the house uselessly any longer. They are riding freight trains out into the unknown places of America. We are at home, weeping, worrying about them. Hollywood wants us to pity the millionaire who, for all his millions, also worries as we do.

Look, the kept lady, the mistress of the stockbroker, is suffering from a broken heart. She eats breakfast in bed. She has cocktails for lunch. She spends her evenings in the swellest nightclub in town. But he betrayed her, the scoundrel of a stockbroker, and her heart is broken—in the script.

We also have been betrayed. And though we get out of bed when the kept little lady is still drinking cocktails, and have put in half a day's work pounding the typewriter or sorting or stitching while she is still having pleasant

dreams, we pity her because her heart is broken like ours. Hollywood wants us to do that.

Day in and day out, Hollywood's dream-factory assembles its plots and tears and joys for profit. Day after day, the illusions and lies and fantasies are manufactured by the skillful exploiters of human emotions. We are all human, is the message of Hollywood. We are human, and patriots, and Americans, and capital and labor should be friends, not enemies. For some day you and I, if we struggle hard, will also be a boss. And day in and day out, we sit and watch these lies.

Outside, in the street, is our real world—where men go hungry, where children are permitted to starve, where millions of workers gather to strike. Some day, there will be other producers, other movies. They will not show the false, empty lies of the existence of the rich and the beauful, but the whole suffering lives the workers lead. They will destroy Hollywood's dream-factory; and in its place, will come a great movie-art of the true lives of the people of America.

BARNYARD POET

H. H. Lewis is a Missouri farmhand, who spends half his time shovelling manure and the better half writing bitter poems against the American kulaks and bankers who exploit him.

We are seeing the rise of a factory-worker literature in this country, but there has been as yet too little that expresses the life of the revolutionary farmers.

"Humpy" Lewis is the first American poet to pioneer in this field. He is young, savage and undisciplined, but

through his crude and often careless lines one receives an authentic blast of the prairie blood and flame. The farmers are desperate; and Lewis is a poet of desperation and fury.

He lets his anger run away with him, yet it is real. Can one find in the most polished art anything better than such reality? I have always preferred flesh and blood, with all its imperfections, to the most classic statue of marble. I am stirred by the workers' correspondence that appears in our Communist newspapers infinitely more than by any stale, slick literarious essay of a "Kit" Morley or Branch Cabell.

More technical skill and "art" of a sort went into the construction of Grant's Tomb than into the rambling shack of a poor tenant farmer. But who wouldn't rather live and struggle in this shack than repose in a tomb?

So Mr. T. S. Eliot is a better poet, technically, than Humpy Cowhand Lewis. Any young Harvard fascist who writes poetry can tell you that. But Mr. Eliot has the fatal weakness of being a corpse, while Humpy Lewis, darn him, is noisily, furiously, and even irritatingly, alive.

I have received recently half a dozen of the most insulting letters from this prairie poet. I had criticized him mildly for certain of his favorite complexes that seemed to me barriers in the way of his development. I used a peashooter on the indignant cowman, and he answered with an overwhelming barrage of Big Berthas, each loaded to the muzzle with cowflop. Was this fair, Comrade Lewis?

H. H. Lewis occupies an important place in our emerging young proletarian literature. Thirty years from now he will probably be in all the red anthologies alongside of Joe Hill. The Soviet American school children will sol-

emnly discuss his limitations, and point out that all pioneers blazing a new path had of necessity to have such flaws. Perhaps, on his birthday every year, the cows on all the collective farms will be hung with garlands, and the young farmer poets will remember their mud-stained granddaddy Lewis in solemn and heroic verses. Things stranger than this are happening in the Soviet Union today.

Meanwhile, the long white beard of a bard does not yet decorate the grim face of our poet, and he writes needlessly insulting letters to his friends. I think it might be interesting to bring the discussion I had with him out into the open. It has certain elements that go beyond any personal feud (not my feud, but his).

To begin with, this son of the Middle West has the customary hatred of New York. In his case, it has even degenerated into a belief that the New York revolutionary writers are engaged in a conspiracy to ignore and suppress him. This, of course, is nonsense; but it is an indication of how far he is from any Marxian understanding of the relationship between the city workers and the farmers.

The fascists of Italy, Germany, Austria and other lands rallied the peasantry to their banners by playing on their prejudice against the city. Today, in the Middle West, we can see our American fascists using the slogan of Down with New York as a mask for their own schemes. Every demagogue-governor of a farming state makes this one of his chief planks for winning votes. At the same time he works for the local bankers and exploiters against the farmers.

How can a Communist fail to see through this fascist lie? It is true that Wall Street is the bankers' capital

of America. But it is also true that New York is a proletarian city. Over a million workers here are on the relief lists; starving, in short. The city is torn with strikes and demonstrations; it is a city of class warfare.

Revolutionary farmers like H. H. Lewis should support New York workers in their struggles, for they are fighting the same enemy who exploits the farmers. But Lewis succumbs to the fascist tactic that would split up the united front between farmer and worker. This does not mean that he is a fascist, any more than I am one, of course. But it does mean that he is as politically backward as thousands of his neighbors whom he should be leading to revolution.

It is unforgivable that a leader should be trailing at the rear of the masses. But that is where one finds Lewis on this particular question of city versus country. Where would the Russian Revolution have ended if Lenin in Moscow had not been able to overcome this same White Guard propaganda among the peasants? Stop this slander, Comrade Lewis; New York may not be America, but neither is Wall Street New York.

The aesthetic fault Lewis has is almost as serious. It is shared, curiously enough, by many bourgeois writers who swing over to the revolutionary cause.

They are sick of the bourgeois world; its false gentility, its culture, its futility. They want to find strength and purpose, and of course, this is to be found today only in the revolutionary working class.

What makes the revolutionary working class superior to the capitalist class is intellect. The workers have a superior philosophy of life. They understand the meaning of these wars, depressions and famines. The capitalists grope in a fog, understanding nothing, and hoping to muddle through. They have lost every ethical and moral

value; they are decadent. But the workers have a new proud confidence in life, and know they will make a new world. This is what makes a Communist ditch-digger superior in intellect and character to any fascist college professor.

Therefore, the fact that workers must live in mud, manure and filth, doesn't mean that this is the basic fact about them. H. H. Lewis likes to shock the bourgeois ladies by using all the unprintable words, and rubbing their delicate noses in the manure he knows too well. But D. H. Lawrence and dozens of other bourgeois writers have done the same. You cannot defeat the bourgeoisie as a class by shocking them. That is one of the old romantic and dilettante ideas.

As for the workers, they know the manure too well, and don't need to be constantly reminded of it. They are trying to climb out of the manure. They want more than photography. They want, in their literature, not only the manure that is undoubtedly present, but also the bright passion-flower of the future Soviet world that will blossom in this soil. They want the things expressed that they feel in their hearts, the beauty, the hope, the courage and sacrifice that goes into the birth of Communism.

THE HEARSTS OF 1776

"You find these pretended enemies of oppression the most unrelenting oppressors," lamented the rector of Trinity Church in New York, in speaking of the revolutionists.

The editor of a popular New York newspaper called the revolutionists, "an infernal, dark-designing group of men . . . wretched banditti . . . the dregs of mankind."

The year was something like 1776. It was not the Communists who were being attacked in such phrases, of course, but the revolutionary fathers of the American republic. The Tories of that day began a tradition of abuse of revolutionists that has continued to our own day, and for much the same reasons.

When Hearst and the Daughters of the American Revolution and a host of similar people claim to represent the American tradition, it is really this Tory tradition that they carry on.

Many of them had their property confiscated for it by the indignant patriots, and some were tarred and feathered, and others were "exported," as the slang of the period had it.

But the flunkeys of the King were as bitter as the flunkeys of capitalism today. If any of Hearst's venal editorial writers are stuck for a few quotations from American history to use against Communism, I am glad to offer them the following from the writings of their renegade ancestors.

For example, here is an extract from a sermon by the eloquent Tory divine, Jonathan Boucher:

"Of all the theories respecting the origin of government," he wrote, "with which the world has been either puzzled, amused or instructed, that of the Scriptures alone is accompanied by no insuperable difficulties.

"It was not to be expected from an all-wise and all-merciful Creator, that having formed creatures capable of order and rule, he should turn them loose under the guidance only of their own unruly wills."

No, God had put kings and superior persons into the world to govern it, said the eminent pastor. Revolution against kings and tyrants was a revolt against God. It

was, furthermore, an attack on property and respectability. The Revolution, said the Tories, had been stirred up by a few crafty men who had played upon the passions and ignorance of "the Mob." A handful of conspirators had prepared a strong drink "to cheat the crowd and fascinate mankind," as one Tory poet phrased it.

"Old Catiline, and Cromwell, too
Jack Cade and his seditious crew
Hail brother-rebel at first view
And hope to meet the Congress,"

sang another Hearstian bard of 1776, in a ballad lampooning the patriots who framed and adopted the Declaration of Independence.

The great Thomas Paine was called "a hireling author..." (one of Max Eastman's artists in uniform?) and "a true son of Grub Street."

The rank and file of the revolution, the American farmers and mechanics who had taken up their rifles for freedom, were called "half savages," from the "backwoods." The patriot camp was filled with "priests, tailors and cobblers... and sailors, insects vile that emerge to light... rats that nestle in the lion's den."

Their inspiration was said to be... "treason... ambition... fraud... bundles of lies... riot... cruelty... cunning... malice... persecution... and superstition...."

"Here anarchy before the gaping crowd
Proclaims the people's majesty aloud...
The blust'rer, the poltroon, the vile, the weak
Who fight for Congress, or in Congress speak."

Yes, it sounds overmuch like Hearst. Even the great Washington was not above the yellow hatred of the Tory pamphleteers.

Washington was "at the head of ragged ranks. Hunger and itch are with him . . . and all the lice of Egypt in his train. . . . Great captains of the Goths and Huns. . . ."

And the Tory Jonathan Odell wrote of Washington, in words that sound like a yellow Will Durant or Don Levine speaking of Stalin:

"Thou hast supported an atrocious cause
Against thy king, thy country and the laws;
Committed perjury, encouraged lies,
Forced conscience, broke the most sacred ties;
Myriads of wives and fathers at thy hand
Their slaughtered husbands, slaughtered sons, demand;
That pastures here no more the lowing kine,
(meaning kulak pastures, of course)
That towns are desolate, all—all is thine."

The Hearsts of our time falsify American history. Would Hearst dare to print the writings of Jefferson, in whose name he professes to speak?

Would he print the writings of Tom Paine, chief firebrand and pamphleteer of the Revolution?

But he plucks lines out of such writings, and distorts them so that he can use them as weapons against the sons of Jefferson and Paine today.

The fascists everywhere are the most infamous demagogues in all history, men without principles or a trace of human honor. Their theft of the people's tradition in each land must be fought by us; we must learn the true history of our land, and teach it to others.

DOWN WITH THE SKYSCRAPERS!

One of the ways you can tell Communism is superior to capitalism is by studying the biggest things under yours and everyone's nose—architecture.

This art, next to that of the moving pictures, is the one that reaches the greatest masses of the people. The Soviet Union is beating America at both—not because Russians are better artists than Americans, but because they are working for the people, directly and simply, under a non-profit system that functions only for the people's good, whereas under capitalism, artists must serve the masters of profit; they must vulgarize, cheat, and lie.

Look at what is happening to Moscow. I visited that city twice—in 1925 and in 1930. On my first visit it was still architecturally the same as it had been under the Czar; the Soviets hadn't had time yet to bring the benefits of Communism to the people's houses.

On my second visit I found several main streets that I couldn't recognize. Tverskaya Street, for example, was lined with splendid new apartment houses, and public buildings of a new and simple splendor.

Friends returning from Moscow say that the most amazing changes have gone on in the five years that have intervened. The most beautiful subway in the world, is only one example. Built with all the love and aesthetic joy that the Greeks put into their temples, it shows what the future will hold for Moscow. Nothing is too good for the workers. Moscow has a ten-year architectural plan that is designed to make it the most beautiful and humanly livable city in the world—the old ramshackle, semi-barbaric capital of the Czar is to become a magnificent garden city for free and equal humanity.

Few of us realize with what poignant horror the Soviet masses await the coming world war. For them the fruits of Communism have just begun to come in; life is growing rapidly better—nay, magnificent, and there are scores of grandiose plans like the one for Moscow waiting to be carried out—if war does not interrupt.

William James prayed for some "moral equivalent" for war, that would inflame the imagination of the masses as does a war, and make peace as thrilling as mass-murder. The Soviets have found this equivalent in the joy of mass-aesthetics, mass-planning, mass-creation of new wonderful cities.

Compare a city like New York with Moscow. New York is supposed to be one of the architectural miracles of history. Some Americans brag about the skyscrapers. For a time, a section of our bourgeois artist world made quite a little cult of the skyscrapers. In their own subtle aesthetic way, they bragged and boasted about all this loose-flung masonry and steel. The skyscrapers were supposed to symbolize something—America's power. America's buoyant young energy that soared idealistically to the heavens.

Returning from Europe recently, I formed on shipboard the acquaintance of a Hindu intellectual from the Punjab, a teacher of history. He was visiting America for the first time, and was filled with an enormous eagerness as to what he would find. He was filled with all the illusions European and Asiatic intellectuals have about America, including the skyscrapers.

"Aren't they too awe-inspiring?" he asked. "Don't you New Yorkers feel crushed, insignificant, as you walk about in the shadow of these giants you have made?"

"No," I answered, "the people of New York take the skyscrapers just about the way a Vermont farmer takes

the mountains around him. They become just a part of your unconscious background. The farmer's main worry is scratching a damned living out of the rocky soil. The mountains don't help him much at that. And the skyscrapers don't help New Yorkers; if anything, they make life harder for most of us."

"Is that so? Why?"

"Because they have congested everything so that there is no air to breathe. No amount of subways or elevated trains can solve the transportation problems these skyscrapers have created. Every hot, terrible, hellish overcrowded subway train at night and morning, jammed with nauseated, pale stenographers, messenger boys, garment workers and clerks, can be charged up partly to these damned monstrous skyscrapers.

"Skyscrapers! no, we have little love or respect for them! They were not built to serve the people's needs, or for any idealistic motive of bringing a new beauty into life. They were rigged up hastily by greedy land speculators, during the most vulgar heights of the boom. Now most of them are half-empty; which proves there was no real human reason for them in the first place.

"We may use skyscrapers under Communism, but they will be built to answer the people's needs. Under capitalism they are only weapons of exploitation and the vulgarization of life."

I don't think my Hindu friend believed me. It was hard to shake his romantic notions, even though I assured him there were millions of New Yorkers who had never entered a skyscraper, or ever thought about this one way or another, and that I would wager that two-thirds of the New York workers would give all the skyscrapers in the world

for a little shack in the country, and a chance for their babies to breathe pure, clean air.

Recently, I ran across some words by Henry James, one of America's few real intellectuals, on this subject of skyscrapers. It was written sometime around 1907, when the buildings were first going up.

> "New York is a heap of big things done for inordinate gain," he said, "and not an expression of any other matters whatever. Dividends flash, flicker and flare up and down them . . . their spikes form a monstrous comb for raking in Profit. . . . The immeasurable bridges and horizontal sheaths of pistons; and the skyscrapers, each in itself a huge, constricted and compressed community, throb, as a complicated watch throbs, with the telling of the hour and the minute, for these are not buildings, but machines, money mills."

I am glad Henry James was not overwhelmed by the sordid skyscrapers of New York. Any Marxian and any worker can agree with the aristocrat, Henry James; skyscrapers do not serve man, either aesthetically or morally, when they are capitalist machines for profit.

HOMAGE TO BARBUSSE

Shelley said that "poets were unacknowledged legislators of mankind." And Stalin has said that "writers are the engineers of the human soul." A career like that of Henri Barbusse, our great comrade who died recently in Moscow, demonstrates the enormous power of the writer who devotes his gifts to humanity.

I am old enough to remember the effect of *Under Fire*, the novel that made Barbusse a world figure, a name that thrilled millions of workers and intellectuals. It was during the darkest days of the World War. The great massacres were still occurring on the poppy fields of France. Thousands of young boys died every day; the papers of every nation were filled with that bitterest and barest of all reading matter—the official casualty lists. There was hunger and disease in every country. The hospitals and insane asylums were packed like sardine cans with broken human beings; the streets were crowded with pale widows and mothers in black, and their blind and crippled men.

But the bankers and the flag-waving demagogues still ruled the day. Those citizens who were still sane and pacifist were hunted down like outlaws. In Europe they were given two or three years in prison; in the America of liberal, save-the-world-for-democracy Woodrow Wilson, pacifists and Socialists were given twenty years to life.

In the trenches, rebels were shot, there were hundreds of such cases in every army. Behind the lines, the war profiteers made merry; in our own "idealistic" America, 11,000 new millionaires emerged out of the war. They grabbed blood money with both hands, and the government helped them. Washington was jammed with racketeers in uniform, contract-grabbers, fixers and dollar-a-year men; big business men who volunteered to serve the government without pay, and were supposed to be terribly patriotic, but, as has been shown later, were there for the loot.

And, too, at Washington, there was a mob of opportunist liberals—like George Creel, and Walter Lippmann—all of them fighting the war with their mouths, and feeling important because Wilson had put them into his govern-

ment machine as a kind of decoy for the decent people of America.

You see, nobody had really wanted this war. Wilson was elected on the single slogan—"He kept us out of the war." So when he declared war a few months after his election, because J. P. Morgan and the bankers needed the war, he had to hide his treachery from the people. And the Walter Lippmanns and George Creels were assigned this part of the filthy work—they sold the war to the liberals and the pacifists.

It was into this atmosphere that Barbusse's book appeared. It was the first truthful account of the great massacre, written by a soldier who had been decorated for valor. It shattered all the lies of the liberals and the *Saturday Evening Post* romanticists. It became a political event—a novel that every Socialist and pacifist read and passed on to his friends.

France had been invaded by Germany. But here was a French soldier who dared to say that France too had its war-makers and shameless profiteers; here was a soldier who reached his hand across the trenches, to the German soldier, and uttered the magic word, "Liebknecht! We must all, German, French, Russian or American, follow the example of Liebknecht! Down with war! Long live the workers' international!"

It is something to be remembered that only two great books came out of that dark period when nobody had the time or heart to write books; and these two were *Under Fire* and John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World.* Both of them were written by our own comrades.

Barbusse had enlisted as a volunteer. He was forty years old at the time of the war; but he won several decorations for courage. Before the war he had been a successful

Parisian journalist, and a writer of a rather decadent tendency. His first book of poems, languid and symbolist in tone, were dedicated to Oscar Wilde. The war changed Barbusse. It wiped off this film of puerile and fashionable decadence, and revealed to him his own deep, strong human heart.

He became an organizer as well as a writer. With the poets, Vaillant-Couturier and Raymond Lefebvre, he formed the powerful league of French war veterans, who unlike our own Legionnaires, really fight with revolutionary means against war, and are not the tools of the big bankers and profiteers, in peace-time just as they were in war.

Barbusse was the main founder of the world League Against War and Fascism. He was a hard worker, and with all this activity still found time to write.

But the war had permanently ruined his health. Looking at his pale, fleshless face, one knew he was a condemned man. He had four or five chronic ailments, of which the least was tuberculosis. But he went on with his work, carried by the flame of his wonderful spirit.

I remember when he came to America. Some two thousand of us, led by the revolutionary ex-servicemen to whom Barbusse was especially dear, went to the pier to greet him. The veterans lifted him to their shoulders and we marched down the street.

Barbusse smiled; but his face was like a corpse. One marvelled that this man could go on living. But he made a tour of some thirty American cities, speaking and organizing. It would have broken a younger and stronger man, but he survived.

I saw him last at the writers' congress in Paris. He made the final speech of the congress; and came into the

back room off the stage, bursting with joy at the success of the congress. He embraced several of us standing there, and kissed us on the cheek in the French fashion. There were tears in his eyes.

And then he went to the Comintern meeting, "to take a last look, perhaps, at my Moscow," as he told a friend.

We will never forget our great comrade Barbusse. And we are glad with him, that he died as he always wished, with his boots on, in the midst of millions of loyal comrades, who pledged to his silent body that his flag of internationalism and workers' peace would never be lowered.

I DREAMT I DWELT IN MARBLE HALLS

Amos Hilton, thirty-one, had been a good bookkeeper. So after he had been out of work three years, the relief authorities gave him a job shovelling gravel on a road. He lived at the end of Brooklyn. They put him to work on a road in Staten Island, ten miles away.

It means subways and long ferry rides twice a day. Amos was skinny, spectacled and a trifle anemic. But he was game, since he had a wife and two kids whom he loved. It all was better than nothing, and "prosperity was just around the corner," anyway.

One night, groggy after a day of shovelling, the little bookkeeper slumped into a subway seat. Half-alive, he read the subway ads with a vacant mind.

The other workers on his project were forming a union. One of the men had approached him at the noon hour and asked him to join. Amos turned him down. What did he

need a union for? He was earning about fifteen dollars a week, not enough to live on, but enough until "prosperity returned" and he could go back to bookkeeping.

He read the brightly colored ads of Corn Flakes, chewing gum and funeral parlors, and he thought about the union, and then he fell asleep in the subway, and had a remarkable dream.

It seemed he had wandered into the most marvelous department store in the world, a colorful palace out of the Arabian Nights, with tinkling fountains, perfumed air, and tropical trees in which gaudy birds sang like advertisements.

He was lost in this marvel, when suddenly a regiment of brightly-uniformed cavalrymen rode down upon him. The men leaped off their horses and surrounded him, all furiously yelling at the same time.

"I'm Macy's, I want to sell you a set of furniture!" one shouted. "Fine maple, rayon spreads. Simmons mattresses! Early American antique ashtrays! Renaissance bathroom! All for only $298, regularly $435! Special sale!"

Amos was frightened by the frantic eyes and wagging mouth of the man, and he said timidly:

"I'd like to take it; our furniture at home is pretty shabby, but—"

"But what—" the salesman roared, angrily.

"But I'm on a relief job."

"Then try Hearn's imported champagnes and cognacs!" shouted another wild-eyed salesman. "Or some winter underwear! Or a tweed suit! We take no profits this year! Philanthropists! Friends of the people! Take it away, please!"

"I'm practically broke," muttered the ex-bookkeeper, "though I wish—"

"How about a new fur coat for your wife? Saks! Gimbels! Russeks! Women's cocktail dresses, with accent on the new street length! Only $49.50 to $135! Your wife needs them. Don't be a piker. Metal sleeves for new crepe afternoon dresses, only $45. Caracul! Invest upon the advice of Jay Thorpe in a coat of unsurpassed chic and beauty, only $575," they shouted.

"No, no, I'm sorry," muttered the little man, apologetically.

"Piker!" screamed a brawny red-faced knight in shining armor, on which was pasted a patchwork of advertisements. "How about a Bonwit Teller checked handkerchief for $2? Newest couturier design? Woven satiny border! Straight from the workshop of the master!"

"No, no," pleaded little Hilton, "you see lamb chops have gone up to 35 cents a pound, and my kids—"

Here a tall girl out of fairyland, a gorgeous blonde with a peach and cream complexion and the curves of a Follies beauty, snuggled up to the little bookkeeper and said, in a seductive Southern drawl:

"Honey, you're not a-goin' to throw down yoh own little sugah-pie?"

"Well," stuttered Amos, "not exactly, Miss—if I knew what it was—"

She twisted her soft, luxurious arms about his skinny neck, and breathed her hot perfume upon him.

"Amos," she sighed, "Ah've waited all mah life for a man like you—a hero, a great lover, a man who spends money. Buy me a Rex Cole electric refrigerator, sweetheart."

"You see—" said Amos, painfully, "I'm just earning—"

"And a new all-wave Philco radio and a case of Haig

and Haig, the luxury Scotch you can afford, and some burgundy red shoe-craft shoes, that prove their real sophistication, and give a fine sparkle to renaissance-inspired costumes. Kiss me, mah fool!"

Amos Hilton kissed her, as she had commanded, but it was as painful to him as an overdose of chili. Too hot. He drew his lips away and stuttered:

"You see, madam, I'd walk a mile for a Camel, because Camels never get your wind, as famous athletes agree. But on my wages and with two kids, I must be loyal to the A. & P. smoked hams at 29 cents a pound, breakfast cocoa, 10 cents a pound can. Alaska pink salmon, 10 cents a can, and so forth, because this is their 76th anniversary sale, sensational big values. Can't you understand?"

"Piker!" hissed the beautiful advertising blonde, and she smacked his face.

"Piker!" yelled all the frantic salesmen as they leaped on their horses again.

"Giddap!" shouted the leader. "I like my Shredded Wheat hot!"

They charged upon poor little Amos Hilton and rode him underfoot, to the battlecry of "For God and Gimbel!" And the blonde twisted her arms around his neck, while a dozen blondes out of other advertisements, who looked just like her, shoved chewing gum, shredded codfish, baked beans and other junk down his throat.

Bang! The subway train stopped, and Amos woke up. Like a good milk horse, he knew his own station, even when asleep.

He was in a daze as he went out of the door. "Darn those ads!" he said, "they muddle you up. They make you want to buy things you can't afford. Maybe I ought

to join that union. I'm sick of being a piker, a pauper, the kind of little guy even a girl in a chewing gum ad wouldn't look at. How can you buy anything without money?"

SOVIET CHILDREN

Maxim Gorky recently described the visit to his home of a little ten-year-old Pioneer who was the author of hundreds of verses. The little Soviet citizen stood up proudly before the great author, answering Gorky's questions with a patient serious concern. He was neither modest nor conceited. He said the deepest influence on his literary creation came from Mayakovsky, the great revolutionary poet.

Then Gorky, startled and delighted by this Pioneer and flourishing poet, asked the boy what books he had read. Had he read Turgeniev?

Oh yes, the poet answered, a long time ago.

How long? asked Gorky.

About a month, said the Pioneer.

Time moves quickly in the Soviet Union, hundreds of years of human effort are compressed and overtaken in tens of years, and with the tempo and rapidity that a new world has grown up in the former empire of the Czars, a new generation unlike any other in the history of man has also sprung into existence.

This ten-year-old Pioneer who wrote, according to Gorky, really talented poems that showed a correct and deep understanding of the social forces at work in the world today, was no startling and exceptional prodigy among the children of the Soviet. He was but typical of

the new children the October Revolution has given birth to. They grow up in a world as remote from the life their parents led as the first cultivation of the soil was from the primitive animal existence men followed in the dawn of the earth. They are socialist children; they are the generation brought up and schooled in teachings of Leninism; Socialism is their great mother.

Over them there hangs no dark cloud of terror and falsehood, of poverty and brutality, as over the children of the capitalist world.

They do not know the lives led by the generation passing its adolescence now in the nightmare of the capitalist crisis. Sometimes they listen in hurt bewilderment to the tortures and the horrors of child-labor, of the lives of children who spend their puberty crouched over a packing table in a great cannery, or buried in the sheds of cotton mills.

Not long ago I saw a letter the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Russian Young Communist League, sent to the young comrades here in America. The editors of the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* asked the young workers of America to contribute articles and stories to the pages of their paper in order to vivify for the youth of the Soviet Union the conditions of the youth in the capitalist countries. "Our comrades," said the letter, "have never seen how capitalist society works. They have no memories of Old Russia."

This is the new generation which is carrying onward the manner of Socialism, fighters for the classless world who have no old memories to haunt them like nightmares.

These young Pioneers are developing new standards of human dignity and new mores of conduct. Reading the *Moscow News*, a typical instance of the struggle between

two worlds, two ways of life, is summarized in the little story of the struggle between eleven-year-old Kolya and his mother, Anna Egorovna Shibaev, wife of a collective farmer in the Moscow region.

Kolya caused his mother great pain. He wrote a letter to the newspaper of the Machine-Tractor Station in the Moscow Province complaining that his mother yelled at him and sometimes even beat him. And Kolya contended that beatings were only done in the Czar's time and not under Socialism.

Anna Egorovna was angered and enraged by the behavior of her son. "There's a child for you," she exclaimed. "Eleven years old and he is looking for new laws already! Four of them I've brought up, and suddenly I can't beat the last one when I want to! I ought to know by now how to bring up children!"

Soon everybody on the collective farm was participating in the discussion about Anna Egorovna's right to beat her son, Kolya. They wrote to the paper. "Anna Egorovna, you must not beat children:..." "I never yell at my grand-daughter. She will grow up and never say an unkind word to me..."

An open meeting was called to discuss the question. One hundred and thirty collective farmers showed up! They came from everywhere, the question agitated all. Anna Egorovna was also there. But she did not speak.

The peasants spoke. This one grew up fatherless, to this day he curses his uncle for the beatings he gave him. That one beat his children from "want and misery," from "ignorance and darkness."

But Anna Egorovna listened to all the discussion and said nothing at all.

Two months went by. Then one day the newspaper re-

ceived a letter from her. It bore the following heading, "Let Any One Say That I Beat Kolya."

"... Kolya has become better. Well, of course, I've stopped beating and yelling at him. After supper he sits at the table and recites his lessons to me. I go to my son, and he begins to tell me: 'Mamma, they didn't teach you like this before. They teach us better now.' 'Yes,' I think, 'I agree with you, my son....'"

And so the children give birth to different mothers; the new remakes the old.

THE BURDEN OF YOUTH

WALKING down West Fourteenth Street the other night, I passed the National Guard armory near Sixth Avenue. Its ugly gray bulk protects a string of pawnshops, saloons and cheap coffee pots from the red menace of the Theatre Union. It is built like a medieval fort, with narrow windows for the archermen, and bastions and serrated walls.

Inside, drums and bugles tooted boldly, and a company of underfed boys, clerks, helpers on trucks, office boys and bookkeepers, wheeled in formation on the drill floor, under the stern eye of a gray-headed sergeant with a stuffed chest like a pouter-pigeon, dragging a useless cavalry sword.

Whom were these boys being trained to fight? The Japanese? The British? The Soviets? Or perhaps their fellow-workers on strike? None of them knew; with blank faces they moved like machines, another batch of cannon fodder being ripened for death.

I watched them through the grated window from the

street, along with a crowd of idle passers-by. And then there was the unmistakable smack of two autos bumping into each other on the street. The fickle crowd ran to see, and I with them.

A taxi had swerved sharply, and had crashed into a roadster parked by the curb. Over the steering wheel of the taxi, the driver hung helplessly. We carried him out. Foam poured from his mouth; and he twitched horribly in a fit.

I recognized the driver. It was a boy I had grown up with on the East Side, a young Jew who had been conscripted into the first World War.

And this was the price he was paying. The war had ruined his nerves, as it had so many other millions of young men. But he had a family, and sick as he was, was forced to drive a cab to support them. Now, when it was discovered that he was a war-victim, he would lose his taxi license. The nation that had destroyed his manhood had no further use for him. He wasn't sick enough to prove his right to a pension; and he wasn't needy enough to be given his back-pay, the bonus.

But back in 1917 he was one of the nation's heroes. I remembered this lad; he had been an enthusiastic patriot, not like some of the others on my block, who went only under the conscript lash.

Poor, shattered youth, so this was the best your country had given you! This was the reward of your loyalty, your generous love of country! This was the pay capitalism gives its heroes!

It was bad growing up during the World War. But as I look around me today, it seems to me that the youth of today is growing up in a worse period. Never has any youth had laid on it such an enormous burden.

This is the generation that will never know what a job means. All the old copy-book stories are no longer true. You can't go into some big firm, work humbly for years, keep your mouth shut, study, learn, prepare yourself, and then rise to the top in the regular course of events.

There is no top. There is no bottom. Millions of young people graduate from the schools and homes of America into an economic vacuum. They hang around street corners and poolrooms, waiting for nothing. It is estimated that over a million are on the road—a new generation of boxcar hoboes, not the old variety that sought adventure, but an army of youth that roams in boxcars hunting for work and bread.

What does the government offer its youth? Life in the C.C.C. labor camps. Hard manual work at $30 a month, of which $25 is kept for their families. This is their future—no more dreams of becoming skilled mechanics, or professionals, and of marrying in the normal course of events—just work and an army cot and chow and $5 a month for the pleasures of life.

This is the future—this sort of work, and war. Many of the "liberals," (they are always so helpful about such matters), think it benevolent of the government to have taken almost a million boys out of the poolrooms and boxcars into these camps. At least the boys have food, shelter and some sort of work. Isn't that better than nothing?

No, it isn't better than nothing. It is exactly nothing. If you should castrate a healthy man, don't be surprised if he is not grateful. These boys feel that something essential has been cut out of their lives. They are restless in the camps, even when they don't know why. They feel

abnormal. Is it normal to rob a young man of his future as worker, citizen and father? To make of him a cog in a military machine?

The fascists everywhere make frantic efforts to organize the youth of today for fascist purposes. Hitler, Mussolini and Mosley in England, have all had the diabolic cunning to sense the hopelessness of modern youth, and to promise them a new deal under fascism.

With bombast and rhetoric, these capitalist liars erect their false cult of youth, and speak of their movements as being a "young man's revolution." We have seen recent efforts in America, like that of Viola Ilma's, to herd the youth into the fascist camp with a snare of idealistic words.

But what has youth gained in Italy or Germany? Nothing but a tenfold dose of war preparations and the labor camps. Fascism is only capitalism fighting like a cornered rat, and assuming any disguise that will fool the young generation. There is no future for young people under capitalism; and fascist capitalism digs only a mass-grave for them.

In all the American cities this year, there will be great parades of the youth on May 30th. These boys and girls will march to show their hatred of war and fascism, and to pledge that they will do all in their power to stop the next war.

High school and college students, young workers from the trade unions, boys and girls from the Y's and the settlement houses, Catholic, Jew and Protestant, Socialist, Republican, Communist and Democrat, it will be a real united front.

The fascists stake their major card on the organization of this youth. But millions of them are beginning to

wake up to their historic destiny. The fascists can only offer them death and degradation. In a Socialist world youth will come into its own. A Socialist world is a world of creation, where every willing heart and hand is needed for the building of a fine new world.

This is the battle of our time. The youth is the main army to do the fighting. Never before could one say as truthfully as to this generation of youth: you have nothing to lose but your chains. Under the fascists, you are a tool, a cipher, a dupe, nothing but cannon fodder. In the Socialist world, you will be master of your own fate.

POOR LITTLE SHIRLEY TEMPLE

My favorite little girl friend, aged six, has become a Shirley Temple fan, and it is really too bad. Shirley has begun to worry my dear little friend, just as Tom Mix, Doug Fairbanks, George Raft, Rudolph Valentino and John Barrymore have worried her elders.

The kid shows all the symptoms of a possible inferiority complex. She's like the poor "under-privileged" wage-slaves, who go to the movies to see all those gallant, wealthy, brave, impossible Hollywood supermen and superwomen in action, and come away feeling they can never, never live up to such standards.

Why should millions of sturdy Americans be insulted daily, made to feel inferior to these royal hams of Hollywood? Any man in overalls is a better man than any clothes-dummy with a waxed moustache in Hollywood, and it's about time America awoke to this fact.

That's what I told my little girl friend. I said: "Honey, Shirley Temple is a cute little girl, clever as they come.

But sweetheart, you're a thousand times nicer. Everything you say and do reminds me of a lovely morning in June; but everything she says and does reminds me of powder-puffs, and cash registers, and press agents with big, yappy mouths, and dark, dirty cabarets where chorus-girls strut in tobacco smoke and the haze of gin.

"She's not a real little girl, but a poor human machine that's been trained to do stunts. She's a little clever parrot, an overworked monkey going through its tricks.

"I'm sorry for the kid; she's been robbed of her childhood and when she grows up everything will be an anti-climax. How will she ever feel anything, when at six years she has been paid thousands of dollars a week, and been gushed over and spoiled like royalty?

"But you, my darling, are learning to be a fine woman some day. You see poverty all around you, and you know that people must work for their bread, and that you will have to work. You don't feel better than others; you love everybody; and how your eyes glow with anger, and how your little heart beats fast when you hear of the wrongs done to people by the masters!

"All your emotions are being developed normally. You scrap with your brother, and he socks you and you sock him, and then your mother bawls both of you out.

"You are more beautiful, I think, than Shirley, and much smarter, but nobody has ever made you conscious of it too much. You'll never know what a good thing this is for your future health and beauty!

"And you are learning much more about life than Shirley; you will have a much richer background for your future thinking and feeling. You don't meet only governesses and directors and press-agents, and big cigar-smoking executives who pat you on the head, and watch your

health, because you are a piece of valuable property, like a trained monkey.

"No, honey; you meet humanity every day; the Italian butcher next door is your good friend, and tells you all about the time he fought in the mountains against Austria. You play with the kids of Irish truckdrivers, Jewish school-teachers, Anglo-Saxon carpenters and longshoremen; you listen to the serious conversation of your parents and their friends, discussing all the great problems of the working class, and how to hope and fight and work for a better world.

"This is a great education you are getting. I would bet a million dollars that in any intelligence test you would outshine poor movie-monkey Shirley.

"Sweetheart, anybody would want you around forever, with your endless curiosity about life, your thoughtful questions, your sassy ways that have never been spoiled by fear. I'm sure Shirley doesn't know how to play such wonderful games with a little rag doll, and a toy house made by her dad.

"And Shirley's face isn't as dirty at the end of a day, I'm sure, nor does she laugh and clap her hands and make it seem like a glorious holiday when there's fried steak for supper once in a while.

"And how you love your people! How you feel things, how you respond to everything that is good and fine.

"So don't envy Shirley Temple; some day she will envy you. If the poor kid had the will and knowledge she'd envy you right now, and kick off the traces.

"You are the child of a radical worker, and even though poverty and hardship awaits you, you will get more out of life than she—you will have love and struggle, and a

mind that has grown up in clean, strong mother earth, not in a humid hothouse."

JUST LIKE LINDBERGH'S BABY

In Flemington, N. J., Bruno Hauptmann is being tried for the murder of the child of Colonel Lindbergh.

Justice is being tested, as the newspapers say, in that small Jersey farm town. The air is full of righteous indignation. The newspapers, the news-reels, the magazines, the radio, are suddenly attacked with a veritable vertigo of justice. Everybody has become the apostle, the warrior and the defender of justice.

But there is another crime which no newspaper has reported. A child was murdered in Jacksonville, Florida, a three-year-old child, and no editor has gone running to the copy desk with a flaming editorial calling for the death of the murderer.

It was not a spectacular crime. There was no ransom of fifty thousand dollars demanded. There were no wealthy celebrated parents weeping in the spotlight. There were no hordes of reporters scribbling down the mother's tearful words. There were no diagrams of the scene of the murder. No photos of the instruments which killed him. No close-up of the killer's shifty eyes. No evidence and no indictment. No detectives and no go-betweens.

The crime was committed in open daylight. The murderer was known. The justice of the peace was in on it. The police shrugged their shoulders.

Eddie Lewis, three years old, was killed, murdered, and the murderer was never brought to trial.

Eddie Lewis was killed the morning of December 13,

1934. He was three years old. His parents were poor Negro workers of Orange Park, Florida. They were unknown people, who had never done spectacular deeds, flown oceans or married colonels. All their life long they had toiled obscurely for the benefit and comfort of others. They rode in jimcrow cars in Orange Park. They had a difficult time meeting the rent each month. They never knew when the jobs they had would end. They never knew what tomorrow held for them—what hungers, or miseries.

Mrs. Lewis worked six days a week caring for the child of a wealthy white man. She was free to tend to her own child, three-year-old Eddie, only one day a week, Wednesday. The rest of the time Eddie had to take care of his own three years without his mother's help.

On Monday evening Eddie got sick. Tuesday evening he was much worse, feverish, and trembling. But his mother had to leave him to take care of the wealthy white man's child.

Wednesday morning he could barely lift his head. There was only one doctor in Orange Park and he was away. The parents, the grandparents and the relatives did not know what to do. There was a hospital in Jacksonville. But they were too poor to have a car. There was no way of getting the sick child to the hospital.

The hours went by. Finally, at one-thirty that afternoon, a white man to whom the grandfather appealed took Eddie to Jacksonville in his car. They drove to a Negro doctor. He blamed the mother for neglecting the child, for not giving him medical attention sooner, charged her two dollars, and handed her a note saying that he had examined the boy and found him suffering from appendicitis.

By this time Eddie's eyes were shut, he breathed faintly, there seemed no life left in him at all.

Everybody got back into the car and began to drive to the Duval County Hospital. On the way they stopped at St. Luke's Hospital. They carried the quiet, dying body of the boy wrapped in an old blanket. But the attendant refused to admit Eddie into St. Luke's Hospital. It did not matter that the boy was dying. The mother's pleas meant nothing. St. Luke's Hospital cures only the whites. They do not take Negroes, not even dying Negro children.

They drove on, to the Duval County Hospital. There the boy was carried into a ward and the doctor's note was read. But then the attendants discovered that little Eddie Lewis came from Clay County. Clay County was outside the hospital's limits. They took care of only Duval County. Orange Park, where Eddie Lewis came from, was just two miles outside the Duval County line. But the two miles were fatal. Duval County refused to help dying Eddie Lewis. He could not be treated in Duval County Hospital—it was two miles this side of the Clay County line.

For two hours they pleaded, and then drove away. Now one could hardly hear the breath from the little boy. He was as still and as cold as one dead.

They came at last to Brewster, a Jimcrow hospital in Jacksonville. Here they refused to examine Eddie, or give him a bed, until the white man had sworn to them that all the hospital bills would be paid. When they were assured that their money was safe, the doctor examined the boy. Now he disagreed with the diagnosis of the Negro doctor. The small body lay there quietly, coldly in the bed. It was too late. The new diagnosis was not appendicitis—but

death. Little Eddie Lewis never awoke to know that at last he had been permitted to enter a hospital. He never learned why he died. He was murdered.

After he was dead, after the white race-hatred of the boss class had killed him, after he was slain by the hospitals, there was no trial in Jacksonville. Neither in Clay County nor in Duval County. There were no reporters sent down by the metropolitan press to write the story of the murder of Eddie Lewis. Was Duval County Hospital charged with his death? Then one should indict, not the hospital authorities alone, but the whole class who were accomplices in the murder of Eddie Lewis. The white bourbons, the plantation owners, the factory owners of the South. These are the ones who are responsible for the murder of Eddie Lewis. They killed him. They murdered Eddie Lewis as surely as though they had smothered him in a dark woods, or slain him in a secret house off some unfrequented road.

Today they are trying Bruno Hauptmann for the murder of a rich man's son. But some day Eddie Lewis' murder will also be avenged. Some day the criminals will be brought to trial for the murders and crimes they have committed against millions of obscure and unknown workers.

On that day, when the murderers, the class which rules America, will stand trial, Eddie Lewis will wear the authority of a judge. He will sit high with those others who will be there to judge and pass out sentence on the criminals. He will sit and preside with Sacco and Vanzetti, with Harry Simms, with Claude Neal, with the host of others unknown and nameless who have been murdered by the ruling class. And among their voices, the voice of Eddie Lewis will not be least.

JAKE, THE RED BARTENDER

New York has become so radicalized, as the saying goes, that one can even find Communist bartenders here. And why not; haven't the food workers, after years of battling, managed to build up a union—a real union? And why should they leave out the bartenders? A barkeep is a worker, too, and earns every nickel he is paid.

The hours are long; the air is bad, your feet ache, and your hands ache, too, from throwing ice around. And your head aches from listening to people. Everybody tells his troubles to a bartender. They buy a glass of beer for a dime, and expect a dollar's worth of sympathy and advice.

Jake, my Communist bartender friend, has learned to listen as well as a psycho-analyst. He has advice for everything. When a man comes to an old-fashioned bartender, and tells him he's had a fight with his wife, the barkeep pretends to be interested. Then he says, "Why not try a few rye highballs?" That's his cure-all for everything. But Jake sells the unfortunate husband a pamphlet by Frederick Engels on *The Origin of the Family.*

This is really more effective, he says. It explains why overworked wives scold their overworked husbands, and why both should be patient with each other, and form a United Front, since both have the same enemy—capitalism. Jake says even ten highballs could never explain all that to a man.

If a worker has been robbed by his boss, and is feeling so sore and helpless that he wants to get drunk to forget it all, Jake talks trade unionism to him and keeps him sober. Jake is an old organizer, and really became a bar-

tender because he was blacklisted in the building trades for his organizational activity.

Over his bar, he has explained the Soviet Union to hundreds of down and out men who said they would like to commit suicide. All of them were helped, and have gone on living. He has reformed scores of petty bourgeois bankrupts who were on the verge of alcoholism and fascism, and has put their wobbly feet upon a brighter path.

Jake is doing a fine job. He is a vivid and slangy agitator, and people enjoy his conversation. They like it so well that they forget to drink. And that's the only hitch in the whole set-up, as far as I can see.

The business is not going so good, and I can see the saloon boss studying Jake with a gloomy eye. Jake may lose his job one of these days. He should learn to compromise, and try to sell a glass of beer for every pamphlet he sells. We all have to compromise under this damned profit-system.

The other night I heard Jake agitating a cop. The cop was hot and tired; he had just come off duty. He told Jake over a glass of beer that he had been assigned to a strike uptown. There'd been a scrap, and a lot of trouble.

"Did you sock any pickets?" Jake asked.

"I sure did," said the cop, "and how! Them guys get my goat! Always provokin' us, that's what they do!"

"They ain't provokin'," said Jake earnestly. "You got them wrong, Gus. Don't you know what a strike is?"

"Sure, I know," said the cop. "It's a bunch of reds that don't want to work."

"You're cockeyed," said Jake. "Everybody strikes, even Republicans and Democrats. They want to work, only they won't do it for charity. If the city cut your pay in half, wouldn't you get sore?"

"I sure would," said the cop. "I need every dollar I get now."

"Well, that's how them strikers feel," said Jake. "They're protectin' their jobs."

"But why do they provoke us cops?" complained the tired cop. "Ain't we workers, too? It ain't easy to be a cop. And all this overtime thrown in—this extra duty for strikes and these red riots. It's enough to drive a man to drink."

"Drink won't solve nothin'," said Jake, wiping off the bar. "Thinkin'll solve it, Gus. Use your bean. Why don't you cops organize, too, and ask for overtime pay? If you're workers, you gotta act smart, like workers. Maybe the cops need a union, too."

"G'wan," the cop growled. "Think I wanna lose my job? Look what happened to them cops in Boston when they went out. The whole lot of them was canned."

"And who's to blame?" said Jake. "The big shots. Not the workers you sock around on picket lines."

"But they provoke us," Gus the cop said. "They boo and they sing and yell."

"That's picketin'," said Jake. "Yuh see how little yuh know, Gus. Yuh oughta read a book once in a while. I kin give yuh a book that'll explain it to yuh."

"I did read a book once," said the cop, "so what?"

"But you never read a book about picketin'," said Jake. "Look, if they cut your pay in half, and you went on strike, what would you do?"

"I dunno," said the cop. "Is that in the book?"

"Yeah," said Jake. "Well, what you'd do is, you'd protect your job. You'd picket, so nobody else could scab at lower wages. Suppose some mug come in and offered

to be a cop at half your wages? Wouldn't you picket him?"

"I guess I would," said the cop. "But I wouldn't provoke nobody, like them other pickets do. I'd lay for the scabs at night, that's what I'd do."

"But wouldn't you have to watch the place they were workin' and takin' the bread out of your mouth?" said Jake. "That's picketin'."

"It may say so in the book, but it makes work for us cops," said the cop. "It gets my goat. Gimme another beer, Jake."

"I will," said Jake. "And here, take this book an' try to read it. I'm givin' it to yuh, Gus. If yuh don't like it, give it to some other cop. Maybe he'll like it. And the next time you're on strike duty, remember it's just somebody's fight for a piece of bread. I know yuh gotta protect scabs, but you don't have to love 'em, do yuh?"

"I don't love 'em," said the cop. "I'm just protectin' me own bread and butter. I gotta family too. I'm a worker, too, ain't I, Jake?"

"Of course,'" Jake soothed him. "But use your head, Gus, and read that book. I'd like to see the cops get smart for a change. You're exploited, Gus, and you don't know it."

"What's that mean?" said Gus.

"Overtime without pay," said Jake. "Have one on the house."

THE SOVIET SHIRLEY TEMPLES

Poor little Shirley Temple! I wrote about her in this column the other day, and some of her admirers thought

me an old crab. But I am really sorry for the kid. I didn't have time to fully explain why, so here is more of it.

Well, Mr. Father and Mrs. Mother of Shirley Temple, if you lived in the Soviet Union and had a kid as naturally bright as Shirley (and she is bright) you would have never been able to exploit her, as you have.

There is a rigid law against child labor in the Soviet Union. It's a proletarian dictatorship, which means it defends the life and liberty of the workers, be they men, women or kids.

It even protects the youthful geniuses who crop up in every generation. Snobs, capitalists and the writers who express their viewpoint have often charged that Soviet democracy means the end of individualism and genius. Everyone would be on a dead monotonous level, standardized and as dumb as Hoover.

But look! in our own America where individualism is supposed to be tenderly nourished, a child genius like Shirley has as little protection as a child textile worker in the South. Both are crushed for life, aborted, stunted and drained, by people who want to make money out of them.

I repeat, the Soviet Union is the first land where child geniuses are really guarded and developed normally.

There is no doubt that such geniuses do exist everywhere. Mozart composed symphonies at the age of six, and was a concert artist. John Stuart Mill knew some seven or eight languages, including Latin and Greek, when he was ten years old. There are hundreds of such cases in history. Science has not yet been able to fathom the laws at work here.

In the Soviet Union this phenomenon has been recognized, and there are special schools for genius, for young

precocious engineers, mathematicians, painters, musicians and architects.

One such school is attached to the Moscow Conservatory of Music, for example. The parents of particularly gifted child musicians are invited to Moscow and given special quarters and a salary, so that they can make a normal home for their child.

The child musician is not taken about, fatigued and excited by performing at concerts. His health is guarded, and his remarkable talent developed as if it were a precious thing, which it is. The Odessa College of Music has another such famous school.

There are groups of young virtuosi, children from six to fourteen who are already wonderful violinists, cellists and pianists. Little Margarita Heifetz conducts a full symphony orchestra of seventy musicians. Any of the kids could go on at a concert and win fame; but they are strictly forbidden to appear in public.

There is a five-year-old violinist, Tima Tassin, for whom difficulties of technique no longer exist. What will she be when matured under such ideal conditions?

Nothing like the Shirley Temple of the future, I am sure; a spoiled and exhausted princess with her best years behind her when she reaches twenty-one; or a fat little smug and empty-headed piece of camera-fodder like the grown-up Jackie Coogan.

There is an anecdote I heard while in Moscow. A little boy of nine was given a book on his birthday by his father, a mechanic. It was called, *How to Drive an Automobile.*

Little Vassya plunged into the book enthusiastically. In a short time he had mastered the theory of driving. He even lectured his playmates on the subject, and boasted, no doubt. They kidded him, and said he couldn't

drive. It made him moody. One day he saw an empty bus standing at the curb. The driver was having his lunch. So Vassya stole the bus.

He drove it all over the city, proudly. He really knew how to drive. He took all the kids out for a drive through the traffic. But the alarm had gone out, and he was arrested.

Next day he and his father were brought up for trial in the neighborhood Workers' Court.

The judge gravely told Vassya of the dangerous crime he had committed, he might have killed himself and others and damaged the bus. The father was warned to keep a better eye on his son.

All this might have taken place in an American juvenile court. But then the judge, sitting in his ordinary workman's blouse and smoking and smiling, questioned little Vassya about motors, gears and carbureters. He was impressed by the boy, and announced his decision:

"In view of Vassya's ability and intelligence he will be allowed to enter a technical school at once, despite the fact that he is much under the right age. How about it, Vassya?"

"Gee, that's swell, Comrade Judge," Vassya grinned. And little Vassya has become one of the outstanding pupils at the school, and shows promise of being one of the cleverest engineers in the Soviet automobile industry some day.

WHY AUTOS STILL MURDER US

In New York last week thirty-four people were killed by automobiles. This was only an average humdrum week,

in only one American city. Last year 36,000 people were killed by autos throughout the nation. Over 100,000 were crippled and maimed for life.

Figures show that more Americans were killed by autos in the past twenty years than in all the wars America has fought since 1776.

It is a ghastly menace and affects all of us. The proletarian pedestrian suffers the most. It is scarcely safe to walk a city street or country highway any longer. The hounds of death bark and roar about you, and swoop down when least expected.

It is supposed to be the price of progress, but as for myself, I am sentimental enough to declare that I would gladly give up every auto that ever came out of Detroit for the life of a single murdered child on the highway.

Yet it is true that the automobile has been a great social factor for progress. It has played a role, like the telegraph, the radio and aeroplane, in destroying sectional lines and provincialism, and is one of the harbingers of a world without passports, tariffs, race hatreds and international war.

We can charge at least two-thirds of the automobiling deaths and injuries to the greediness and inefficiency of the profiteering capitalist system. As in other fields, progress could have been achieved without this enormous price.

In the Soviet Union a great continent is being developed without the brutality and horror that attended the opening of the American continent.

Soviet Russia has mined a great deal of gold, but there have been no frenzied gold rushes there. There have been no land booms, like our own Florida bubble. There haven't been the sheepherder's wars, the wholesale murder that at-

tended our oil well booms, the long casualty lists of workingmen that marked the building of our transcontinental railroads, or great dams, skyscrapers, and other construction projects.

The Soviet Union now mines almost as much metal and coal as America, without a tenth of the accidents. Yes, it is possible to have a large-scale industry, and the mass luxury and progress this insures, without chaos and mass murder. That is, if the industry is owned by the nation, as in the Soviet Union, and not by greedy profiteers, as in America.

Speed is the chief cause of most automobile accidents. Everyone knows that; but in the scramble for sales, the auto profiteers have stepped up the speed of their cars.

Read the way they boast about this in their ads; and appeal to the speed craze. Year after year the speeds have gone up, until now the low price cars make eighty miles an hour, and the more expensive go as high as a hundred and twenty.

Only a maniac wants to go that fast. It serves no useful purpose, and is a menace to the rest of us. But try and get a law passed that would limit the speed range in the manufacture of a car. You would find out soon who is running this government at Washington! The billionaires of Detroit make profit out of every murder on the road by these speed maniacs. That is why the ghastly game goes on, despite the horror-stories and editorials in the bourgeois press. "Sudden death" pays dividends.

There are other capitalist factors in this unholy massacre of Americans by the automobile.

It takes years before a man can become a locomotive engineer. But almost anyone can get a license to drive an

automobile. The politicians want the license fees, and the auto manufacturers want to sell cars.

In some states, like Florida, a driving license isn't even needed. They are glad to get your gasoline taxes and fees for the plates. And now some states are reducing the fees for plates. In Georgia you can get them for two dollars, and it has brought thousands of people from other states where there is a higher fee. They get the plates by mail—it is just a Georgia racket typical of that g-great and windy fascist friend of the pee-pul, Governor Talmadge.

One of the factors for death are the trucks on the highways. The American cities and country highways were never meant for trucks. These dangerous boxcars do not belong among the little roadsters and sedans.

In a socialized nation roads would be built for trucks, if necessary. In a capitalist country we permit them to slaughter the citizens.

The modern tools of production have grown so enormous that capitalism can no longer be entrusted with them. It is a system of private ownership that grew up in a period of small factories and machines.

Today machinery has become social, and unless it is owned socially, by the nation, and controlled, it is a source of social death and degradation. The automobile is a national problem, not a personal one, any longer. I wish we could organize some of the victims of the auto—I am sure they are ripe for revolt of some kind. I myself have often wished I could take a shot at some speed-maniac who just grazed by me on the wings of crazy death, and grinned back as if to say, "Where's your sense of humor?"

JACK MADDEN'S TREASURE

JACK MADDEN was a man from Breffny of Connacht. It was twenty years since he'd come to New York in a big ship, over the restless sea, and all his cousins and uncles and aunts were at the dock to meet him. Jack was a man blessed with relatives and little else. But they were good relatives and they found him a job in the subway, where there was hammering and digging to be done.

So for twenty years Jack had been a subway track walker. He worked at night and never saw the sun. He'd been a man of the sun and rain, and at first it was hard to live in the darkness and never see his children by daylight, for he was sleeping then. But it was a living, and he was grateful to his relatives who'd helped him in new America, and it kept his wife and children in food.

Jack took it all like a man. But one day, after the twenty years had passed, he chanced to look in a mirror. What he saw there made him curse.

"My face is white and weary as an old worn-out mare's. My hair is graying. My eyes have sunk with the darkness. The heart has gone out of me. I'm an old sad thing at forty, and no treasures have I found in America."

So he began to brood and to dream and to wonder why he hadn't made his fortune in America, as they'd told him he would when he was young.

Once, around the lonesome midnight, he was walking his track, tapping the bolts and nuts in the rails, tightening here and there, and watching for the roaring trains.

The whistle came of a train. Jack sat down beside the track. And sitting there, who should he see but one of the Good People, a little man no bigger than your shank, and dressed in forest green. Jack knew him at once; it was the

family fairy he had spoken to so often in the Irish hills of his boyhood.

"Well, my brave Jack," said the little man, grinning out of his sly little eyes, "I found ye at last after all the years. What a mess you've become."

"I know it," said Jack. "It's this work I'm doing, and the poverty. The curse of the poor be on the men who have done it, the subway bosses."

"They'll meet their time," said the little man, "but meanwhile, Jack, you're the biggest fool in the world. Don't you know there's gold everywhere in America? Why don't you dig for some of it? It'll give ye the chance to see your children by daylight, and take the old woman to Coney Island and the like."

"I'd dig, if I knew where," said Jack, hopefully.

The fairy laughed.

"Dig here, Jack," he said, "the Indians buried it, but they were Gaels at heart, and left it for you."

With that the little man was gone like smoke.

So Jack dug in that spot, and sure enough, he found a powerful fine sack of pure gold and splendid jewels. He hid it under his coat and walked joyfully until he came to a station, where he threw his tools away and hurried for home.

The wife was sleeping with the children, in the measly old tenement flat, but he woke her.

"Woman," he cried, "we're rich at last! The Madden family fairy has given me some of the gold and jewels of America. It's a beautiful treasure."

But the women, God bless them, aren't as foolish as men. They are practical. Whenever their men dream, they are sure to go in the other direction, and speak of the butcher and baker bills.

"Jack," she said, "I'm glad to hear the news. But did ye spit on the fairy gold?"

"No," he said, "I was so glad I forgot. But I'll do it now." And he spat on the treasure, so that it might not melt away, as such gold does.

Then the two of them sat up the whole night joyfully planning what they should do with the treasure. At first all the happy talk was of shoes for the children, and warm clothes, and all the food they wanted, and a better place to live, and a trip to the old country, and an automobile, maybe.

When they had a grand time and had spent a fortune on such things, Jack began to think of his cousins and sisters and all his numerous relatives.

"Uncle John needs an operation for the hernia he got longshoring," Jack reminded his wife. "And there's the poor widow Annie and her five little ones, and Cousin Joe, that's had no work for years. And Paddy Madden, with all the grief on him, and Elinor, that's having another child, and no food in the house, and Tommy Madden's kids in the orphanage, and Sheila, Rory, Dick, Michael, Veronica and all. Everyone of them in want, and I must help them all, for they're my own blood kin, and I love the most of them, barring a few villains, but I ought to help their children, anyway."

Jack's wife said, like a good woman, "You're right, but let's count the treasure up, and see whether it can go around."

They counted it up, and they counted up the things they ought to do for Jack's own children and the children of his relatives. It was a rich treasure, but figure as they would, they could not stretch it among all the kin.

This troubled Jack and his wife sorely. As you know,

you dare not help one relation and not another, if you have found gold. It is against the laws of God and man, and your own heart, and besides, the forgotten relatives would curse you to their dying day, and make life unpleasant.

Well, sir, Jack went to sleep, and all night he tossed and moaned in a nightmare. What he dreamed was that he was running over the great lonely fields with an army of his relatives pursuing him for the treasure he'd found. They shouted of their poverty, their distressful want and woe, and why wouldn't Jack give them the gold?

"But there isn't enough to go around," Jack cried, but they wouldn't listen to him, they were that poor they were desperate.

In the morning when Jack woke he was wearier than he'd been in many a year of subway track walking. He went to look at the sack of treasure.

"Mary," he called to his wife, "wake up! the treasure's gone. There's nothing but a great flaming eel in the sack, with eyes like a devil's!"

"Throw it out of the window!" the wife cried. "I warned ye to spit on the treasure! Now the fairies have taken it back!"

Jack was downcast, too, for a moment. But then he said, "I'd never have been happy with all that gold, anyway, if we could not have helped all my kind. How could I eat when I knew my own people were hungry? Maybe fairy gold is not the way out of the poverty of the world, and there are better ways, Mary. I'll go back to me job and think about it—maybe there's a great lesson in it all."

"You should have spit," she said.

A SECRET MEETING AMONG THE PINES

THERE was a yellow moon over the pines. We drove through twenty miles of ragged farms and woodland, always on the watch for the deputies. At last we came to a lonely tenant shack in the depths of the big plantation. And here some thirty men and women were waiting. Negro farm workers whom the town organizer with us had assembled to form a new branch of the International Labor Defense.

It happened about a month ago, on my trip south. What a great epic is in the making in the south. It is a revolutionary legend that will go into history beside the heroic days of Lenin's underground Russia, and Thaelmann's Germany.

A kerosene lamp and a lantern flickered. By its light I could see the dark, silent, solemn faces of the farm workers. Most were dressed in overalls, powerful, friendly giants with soft eyes. Some of the women were in their Sunday dresses. Outside the bare little shack, some of the workers were scattered along the road and in the woods. They were our guards.

These people, sunk in the backwoods of an ignorant southern state, listened to the organizer as to an emissary from another world. It was all new to them. But in this community, three Negroes were in jail on a framed-up murder charge. A young Negro farm girl had been half-beaten to death in the fields by the boss only a week ago. There was a daily crime by the masters against these workers. They knew hunger and persecution; and though they had never read Lenin or heard of the International

Labor Defense, they were ready to come to a secret meeting in the woods, and listen with profound attention.

I have never spoken at a meeting that touched me so. All the truths of Communism that we repeat so often, until sometimes they become routine, took on a new fresh meaning. When you said the word, "hunger," a deep sigh came from this group, and mournful, Amens. When you spoke of freedom for black and white, the Amens came louder. Two women began to cry. As I spoke I felt like crying, too. Oh, how all the centuries of slavery our class has suffered pressed in upon me. How real it was in this backwoods shack, by the light of a kerosene lamp, with the moon over the pines outside the door, and the sheriffs around.

Sometimes when you take a sensitive tourist around your familiar home city, his comments refresh your own dulled vision, and make you see your city again. Great art does that with the common experiences. In this meeting in the woods I saw Communism again, and all it had meant to me when I first came to it as a lonely, bewildered boy.

The organizer, a giant farmer about forty-five, marked in the community by the law as a known Red, but carrying on his job fearlessly, introduced another white comrade, a local farmer, and myself. Here is one of the phrases he used:

"You have known only white bosses. You have come to hate them, and rightly so. But these are a different sort of whites. You can trust these whites. You can come into their houses, and share everything. If you need a bed, you can share their bed. If you need food, take what is on their table, they are your comrades. This is what our

movement means, the unity of black and white for the freedom of both.

"Yes, you don't know such white people, but your daddies must have told you about them. They are the same people who came down from the north in '61 to free you from chattel slavery. They mean what they say, and in them there is the indisputable spirit of Jesus Christ."

A working man organizing an I. L. D. branch in the name of Jesus Christ!

Many will say that one ought to follow such an introduction with an exposure of Christianity and its service to capitalism. But I didn't do so; and it should not be done.

There is something more important to be done, and that is to help destroy the social conditions that make for superstition.

Religion still means a great deal to the Negroes, as to many whites. This is because religion was for long years their only emotional escape. It seemed a promise to them of freedom of some sort. They believed it literally, as their spirituals show; heaven to them meant a home where all God's children would be equal and happy.

ARE COMMUNISTS SEX-MAD?

THE fascists in America are beginning to build up their own literature. They are writing novels, a few with some skill, like Miss Wylie in the *Saturday Evening Post*, but mainly of the type you would expect. It is startling how in Italy, Germany and Japan, fascist literature reeks with the same sort of sadism and pornography one finds in this emerging movement in America.

Abnormal economic conditions breed the same type of abnormal personalities, whatever the race or nation.

A young girl who is a member of the Pioneers, an organization for working class children, sends me the following note on one of these novels:

"The other day," she says, "I ran across a book called *Comrade* by someone named George Bayle. It is dedicated to Howard Clark and 'Comrades M. and J.'

"I don't know whether this book has been called to your attention. On the flap it is stated that the book is based on a certain phase of radicalism, and that it may anger some and shock many.

"The Young Communist League, the Communist Party, and the Pioneers, are involved. Lita, the heroine, loses her job and decides to live with a Young Communist League member, Alex. She is pregnant, but she is taken to the 'Physician' and her situation is righted to normal.

"Alex speaks at an open air meeting in Union Square. The cops swoop down and Alex is badly injured. Lita, half naked, chains herself to a post and shouts, 'Don't let them take him away! Ain't you got guts?' etc.... she uses a great deal of vile language; in general, she is always cussing and swearing brazenly.

"For her 'good work' the Communist Party sends her to the 'Red Camp.' The activities there are as far removed from Communism as you can imagine. It is all sex, and the author just wallows in dirty details. He certainly is a man with a diseased mind.

"Lita is called 'The Flame' because of her fiery speeches in Union Square. The Communist Party plans a speaking tour for her. And that's about all there is to the plot. The rest is just filthy lies about sex. Hearst ought to run

this story in his paper. It is his kind of thing, exactly. Please expose this trash in your column."

Well, Comrade Pioneer, your little letter is enough of an answer. You are a young girl and a Communist and your indignation against such filth is itself a demonstration that Communist girls have wholesome minds.

It is the bourgeoisie in decay who write books like these. These are characters who have been declassed, beaten by capitalism, uprooted, robbed of all hope and idealism. They fluctuate from one messiah to another; they even drift into Communism, some of them.

The best straighten out, and become fine, loyal Communists; we have seen many such splendid cases. The riffraff return like dogs to their old vomit. These become often the Communist "experts" in the yellow press, like Don Levine, Eugene Lyons, et al.; or they become open fascists, like the Lawrence Dennises; and some write novels, thinking to turn a dishonest dollar or two out of the timely sensation of a combined pornography and red-baiting.

The leaders of fascism often come from this uprooted, decadent middle-class group. They are people to be despised, and yet they are also to be feared; the neurotic is more dangerous than a normal person, because he is less human.

Do Communists do nothing but spend their time in sex activities?

To state the question is to see at once how silly the charge is. Who organizes trade unions, labor defense organizations and workers' schools? Who fights on picket lines, who is it that boards a Nazi ship like the Bremen and tears down the pirate flag?

You find Communists everywhere, and everywhere they

are brave and loyal and busy at the heroic task of building a new and better world.

An obsession with sex is only found among idle people, those without a social vision, parasites and drifters.

Communists are not Puritans. They have no false shame about sex, because it is a normal activity of human beings, it is a natural process, the device of sane, healthy old Mother Nature for continuing life on this planet.

But do Communists have only sex on their minds? My, my, what a good thing that would be for Dirty Willie Hearst and the capitalists! How they would like it to be true. It happens, however, that Communists have fascism and profiteering and the Hearst racketeers on their minds, and are constantly trying to make the American people see how much better life could be for everyone if we got rid of the capitalist fungus.

This sex lying about Communists is only another way of trying to make the people distrust us. It is just base propaganda coming from diseased minds. And it will fail, because anyone who has ever met a group of Communists sees at once that it is a great lie.

IN HENRY FORD'S INFERNO

For years, before the 1929 earthquake in Wall Street, the myth of Fordism was used all over the capitalist world as an answer to Communism. Henry Ford, so the legend ran, had ushered in a new capitalism. His program of high wages and short hours, combined with the most ingenious technique of mass production, would abolish poverty and unemployment forever. It wasn't necessary to first drive out the exploiters like Henry, and socialize

the machines. Henry was the best and only real socialist.

He was an enlightened capitalist, and it really didn't matter that he owned his great factory. Ownership was unimportant; let the capitalists take their tribute; under a system of enlightened capitalism the workers could afford to let them have it. There would be more than enough to go around; capitalism could give the worker more than socialism in real goods.

European labor leaders with millions of starving and rebellious workers on their hands, crossed the Atlantic and visited Detroit, then returned to their native lands to soothe their bitter armies with this newest and shiniest model of capitalist pap.

Yes, it was quite a myth. And it blew up with a great bang and a nauseating smell during the depression. Thousands of Henry's "happy" workers now roam the Detroit alleys and streets, eating out of garbage cans. The Little Father is too busy keeping up the profits on his investments to worry about the human beings he has used up and scrapped. When the human beings tried to march into Dearborn to ask for relief, King Henry met them with an army of thugs and shot and tear-gassed his slaves and killed three.

This Ford massacre ended all this liberal talk about Ford's benevolence forever. It is hard for Henry's publicity machine to revive the useful myth, and even the *Nation* rarely praises him now.

Going through the Ford plant here in Detroit is one of the great American sights, really more interesting than visiting the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls.

Here is the ultimate thing in capitalist exploitation, this fabulous factory which covers hundreds of square miles, and owns its own coal and ore mines, its own rivers,

docks and ships, its own forests and rubber plantations and cotton fields.

It is an empire ruled by one man—a specialist who is a giant in his own narrow field, but who otherwise is an inferior and poisonous human being, mean, egotistic, suspicious, miserly, brutally insistent to the point of bloodshed on his own whims, a moody despot with a mind more provincial than that of the most barbarous village Baptist.

How incredible it will seem fifty years from now, that such a man could have had the power of life and death over hundreds of thousands of his fellow-men. We marvel that the Romans tolerated Caligula and Nero, but our posterity will marvel at us for having accepted the rule of Henry Ford and his like.

Dearborn is the city where the Ford plants are located. The mayor, the judges, the newspapers, the schools, the cops and dicks and streets and saloons—everything here wears the Ford trademark—belongs to him frankly and openly. It is like Nazi Germany. There are spies everywhere, listening to whispers, searching for dangerous thoughts. All that is lacking is the Aryan salute, and the obligatory Heil Ford! Ford controls the moving pictures you see in Dearborn, the history and ideals your children are taught, the editorials you read. Ford tells you how late you may stay up at night. Ford controls your street car fare, and the jokes you may tell.

America is supposed to be the land of individualism. But Fordism is the thing the capitalists have established in many parts of the country, and wish to make universal. They want a land of dumb, willing robots, who will work themselves out by the time they are forty, and then quietly go off somewhere and die.

Yes, the old story that Ford makes robots of his men is not at all exaggerated. The conveyor belt is a horrible sight, a great device to murder the human soul.

It need not be; it is used in the Soviet Union, and men work hard there, too. But not at this inhuman tempo. In the Soviet factories the workers are allowed five minutes off for smoking and relaxation at the end of every hour. Here a man can't go out to the toilet more than twice a day; and it means much red-tape, everything but a royal permit from Henry himself.

Dicks and spies and foremen swarm everywhere, with their beefy faces and suspicious little eyes. There must be a snooper and strongarm to almost every worker, one sees so many of them.

Workers are not allowed to speak to each other. It is against the rules for two or three to get together in the toilets, which are watched incessantly.

The speed-up is terrific. A visitor gets dizzy watching a man at work. They work hard in the Soviet Union, too, but for every spy and slave-driver one finds at Ford's, there is a doctor or social worker busy in the Soviet factory, to see that men do not overwork, or break down. The Soviet workers get vacations of a month with full pay; they have no fear of unemployment or accident; they are insured against all the contingencies of life.

Here one passes through an inferno of fear. You can see it in the eyes of these driven men. None of them knows but that he will be on the streets tomorrow, where thousands of his fellow-workers now roam.

None knows when the inevitable accident will strike him down, leaving him another forgotten victim on this battlefield of capitalism.

Just in an hour, I saw three recent cripples at work in

the plant. Two of them had bandaged hands, and a finger was missing. They worked with one hand. This was Henry's philanthropy—the way he avoids paying compensation—he lets the cripples work.

In one department one sees scores of elderly and middle-aged matrons, concentrated on the big punch presses they operate. Many of these women, it is easy to see, should not be at work. They are mothers who have worked all their lives, and under a Soviet system would be given pensions and a last few years of comfort.

But they represent another of Henry's numerous "philanthropies." These are women whose husbands have been killed in the plant. Henry pays no pensions, but he allows the widows to work for him. It is said that a man is killed almost every day in the Ford plant, and that this never is printed in the papers. Henry is as secretive about such things as Hitler about his own butchery.

But it would take a year to know Detroit and to know intimately all the strange details of Henry's "philanthropy." More than anything he fears trade unions or any other form of self-organization of his slaves. He controls everything, and yet even here, as in Nazi Germany, brave rebels break through the terror. Leaflets are distributed, union agitation goes on, toilets are daubed with working class slogans. Often on the conveyor belts the workers will find copies of the shop newspapers which the Communists at Ford's publish. Nobody squeals on the Communists, and the spies can't help Henry. Everybody who isn't a spy or a flunkey in Detroit and Dearborn hates Henry Ford. This is also another surprise one gets on a visit here; the local people know the great "philanthropist" too well, and his concentration camp of a factory.

Henry ought to put on a set of false whiskers and walk around his empire and hear what the people have to say of him. They love him about as much as their forefathers loved King George.

THE FATHER GAPON OF DETROIT

On a Chicago street—or was it in Milwaukee, St. Louis, Indianapolis or Davenport, Iowa—I heard some newsboys yelling sensationally, to the amusement of the passersby, "Wuxtry! Wuxtry! Santy Claus Has Committed Suicide!"

Touring the Middle West on a speaking tour that covered some twenty cities, there were many such items that linger in the mind, now that the dizzy routine of catching trains is beginning to wash out.

There was the old blacksmith in Davenport, for example, who wanted to know whether I ever saw Floyd Dell. He had known Floyd when the author was a young, inquisitive groper, and the blacksmith was one of his guides to Socialism. Floyd Dell mentions the blacksmith, I believe, in his first novel, *Moon Calf*. And here he was in the flesh, still rugged and hearty, and a Communist.

"What's happened to Floyd?" he boomed. "Seems to have drifted away from the working class. Thought the boy would be a help to us one day."

"I don't know what's happened to him, comrade, except that he lives in a literary suburb," I answered, "far from the struggle for life."

Jan Wittenber, the Chicago artist, faces twenty years in jail for "criminal syndicalism." He was one of a group of workers who had held a demonstration in Hillsboro, Ill., for unemployment relief.

Nothing happened at that relief demonstration, except that a mob of pathologically-inflamed police rushed upon the miners and their wives and hungry children, and beat and maimed and clubbed them brutally.

There is no charge against Jan Wittenber and the other defendants in the Hillsboro case, other than being present at the sickening scene. But the group has served long months in a filthy jail, and face longer terms, unless the working class prevents the crime.

Criminal syndicalism. It is a law that was passed during the post-war red hysteria. Anybody who doesn't vote Democrat or Republican and is caught reading a pamphlet by Karl Marx can be jailed for a good part of his life under this law.

It is fascism in practice, here in America. In Oregon and other states labor leaders have also been framed under this law recently. Hearst wants to make it a federal law. So does the Chamber of Commerce. Father Coughlin may be heard from next.

The liberals are busy worrying about the Soviet answer to Kirov's assassination, while here, under their academic noses, their whole world of civil liberties is being wiped out.

In three cities where I was dated to speak, local fascist forces brought sufficient pressure to have our leases for a meeting place cancelled at the last moment.

In Cincinnati, the D.A.R. and American Legion made a front page hullabaloo for several days, and there was talk of tear gas bombs to break up our meeting.

My address was to be on the subject of modern litera-

ture, and for the first time I was made to feel how dangerous a subject that can be. Yes, tear gas has filtered into the ivory tower.

In Pittsburgh I heard a little story that was an answer to all this fascism. It showed that here in America, as in Nazi Germany, all the slander and terror of the capitalists will never destroy the working class will to a better world.

It seems that an unemployed council held a meeting to raise funds for the *Daily Worker*. There were some fifty men and women present. They were all on relief, and hadn't seen any cash for years.

Out of these fifty people, only eight cents was collected. Everyone felt bad about it. So a motion was made, and passed unanimously, that next day everyone present was to sell a loaf of the relief bread he or she received, and donate this to the *Daily Worker*, which, literally, was as necessary as bread to them. You cannot murder such a spirit, you capitalists!

Father Coughlin has become the chief bell-wether of incipient fascism in America. That is the impression one brings back after a hasty tour of the midwest.

If one examines the program of this radio priest, one finds that it is almost an exact duplicate of the Austrian Catholic Fascism.

But millions of people in the Middle West are being taken in by its vague revolutionary slogans, just as Hitler and Mussolini fooled them abroad.

Even industrial workers take the fake father's petitions around from factory to factory, and get members for his unholy crusade.

Do they want labor unions abolished, swallowed up in a fascist state? Do they want an intensified imperialism,

and a new world war? Do they want lower wages and higher prices? Do they really care to see free speech and civil liberties wiped out? Are they against unemployment insurance?

Of course not; but obviously they don't see that this is Coughlin's program. The American masses have been radicalized, but are not yet sufficiently developed to see through this dangerous demagogue.

The fierce white light of exposure must be made to beat on the bull-roaring Father. There was once a priest in Russia named Father Gapon. He also roused the naive Russian workers with a seemingly radical program and led them in a march to petition the Czar for liberalism.

At the gates of the Winter Palace, the Cossacks charged them, and over two hundred workers were killed. This was the event history knows as Bloody Sunday. Later Father Gapon was exposed as a police spy. Whom is Father Coughlin working for? His tie-up is more subtle, undoubtedly, but will yet be exposed. Meanwhile, every worker who sees through Coughlin should begin to ask his deluded followers: why is Father Coughlin not helping the unemployed? Where does he stand on the war question? Why does he attack Soviet Russia, and never Nazi Germany or Fascist Austria? Why has he never defended striking workers when they are so brutally attacked by the police? Does he approve of Hearst's attempt to start a red scare in the universities? Why does he attack the bill to abolish child labor?

And there are dozens of similar questions. From making radio speeches this "father" has now begun to organize a political movement, a future army. And the shadow of the swastika looms over the Middle West, unless the working class wakes up to the menace.

WHAT CHEER, BRITISH EMPIRE?

WITHOUT a doubt, British Imperialism is not as hale and hearty as it was before the war. The old lady of Threadneedle Street (where the banks are located) is developing many ailments.

In Ireland she has had to clap her agents Cosgrave and O'Duffy into fascist uniforms. That company union known as the Irish Free State is not working out so well; the workers are beginning to see through it, as they always do eventually through every form of company union.

In India the sacred Gandhi has been fasting as usual, but the younger Hindus are commencing to suspect that the armed British forces are quite insensitive to this kind of thing, and would rather have Hindus fast and be passive than fight.

In the Near East there is trouble with the Arabs; they were roused during the war by that great mystic and British imperialist, Colonel Lawrence. They were given many promises, and they shed blood for England on the basis of these promises. Now Colonel Lawrence is translating Homer, and the Arabs are left holding the bag.

They are restless. The whole empire is restless, it is falling apart like an old wormy boat.

A British cruiser has arrived in the port of New York. It is the *Norfolk*, a trim three-stacker mounting eight 8-inch guns in four turrets. She is flying at her fore the red and white flag of a Vice Admiral who commands the West Indies station.

If you heard his name, you would find it hard to believe that the Empire is slipping. It's such a long, solid, ancient name, the kind of name muggs like us and our children or grandchildren couldn't ever hope for. We

have to get along with a surname and a family name, but a British aristocrat generally has a compound name to knock you down like a club.

Well, are you ready? Here's the name, as reported in full by the New York *Times*. The commander's name is:

Vice Admiral the Hon. Reginald Aylmer-Rantouly-Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax. What's that, you in the rear, you're hard of hearing? I'll repeat it for you; this name of the great boojum who fought under Beatty at Jutland, is Vice Admiral, the Hon. Reginald Aylmer-Rantouly-Plunkett—(are you there)—Ernle—oh, hell, let's just call him Reggy and be done with it. His wife probably calls him that; women are too darn sensible to warm up the toast and make the coffee in the morning and then yell up the stairs: "Breakfast is ready, Hon. Reginald Aylmer-Rantouly-Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax" and so forth. No, they just growl, "For Cripe's sake, come down and get it, Reggy!"

Well, it's a solid enough name. But Vice Admiral Reggy isn't feeling quite too solid these days. His empire has the pip, and it's begun to affect him, too. He had a terrible day in New York. First he had to exchange pleasantries with General Nolan and Admiral Stirling of the American forces defending the city of New York from the Japanese. Then, after this chore was over, with his rheumatism bothering him, and a certain boil in a delicate spot beginning to buzz, the Vice Admiral was dragged off to see Mayor O'Brien.

It is the diplomatic duty of a British imperialist to treat influential Irishmen as if they were his equals. But Admiral Reggie found it hard to talk to the Mayor. The Giants' baseball team had just been calling, and the Mayor, who is somewhat deaf, dumb, blind and feeble-

minded, but otherwise quite a normal Tammany politician, at first mistook Vice Admiral Reggie for a baseball player.

"That was a wonderful fly you caught last Tuesday at the Polo Grounds," smiled the Mayor.

"What, what?" spluttered the Admiral. "O'o ever 'ad mentioned that? My good man, I despise polo."

But an interpreter patched up the matter, explaining to the Mayor who the strangely costumed foreigner was. So the Mayor and the Admiral had a long conversation about duck shooting. Neither had ever shot a duck, but it seemed to be a safe subject. They bored each other completely, until a reporter for the New York *Times* saved the Admiral, but only for something worse.

This reporter was an intellectual, from a very intellectual rag. He wasn't going to ask Admiral Reggie the banal old tabloid questions, which never vary, and always want to know merely whether New York girls have prettier ankles and chests than London girls.

No, this reporter had come ready for real business. British Vice Admirals with names like that don't often drop in at City Hall in September. Deep called unto deep. Noblesse oblige. The reporter spent all morning in a speakeasy, reading up on British history and H. G. Wells, and Sir Josiah Stamp and the like, and thinking and thinking about questions to ask.

He was well-primed when the historic hour struck, and he, the unknown reporter, set forth for City Hall to sacrifice himself for God, country and the New York *Times*.

City editors have a peculiar passion for the correct spelling of names, so the first thing was to get this out of the way. The name, as most of my little readers will remember, was Vice Admiral the Hon. Reginald Aylmer-Rantouly-Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax.

His wrist limp after writing this down, his frame shaken by tense emotions and hiccoughs, the daring explorer and martyr for the New York *Times* then asked his historic question:

"Admiral, you command five cruisers and two sloops for the West Indian station. Will you tell me what you do with them?"

Dumfounded, the Vice Admiral stared at the man. Such a question had never been asked of an admiral.

"What we do?" he repeated, leaning against the statue of Civic Virtue.

"Uh huh," sneezed the sly reporter, tickling Mayor O'Brien in the ribs.

"What we do?" mulled the Vice Admiral, his eyes taking on a strange glare. "What we do—what we do——"

It was like that fable of La Fontaine. Somebody asked the centipede which legs he used first in walking with his thousand legs. The centipede began to think about the matter, and got so confused he never was able to walk again.

"What do we do——" O, this American barbarism, to put such a question to a British admiral of a long ancestry. "What do we do——"

But blood will tell, and it certainly told in the Admiral. At first he was groggy, but he pulled himself together and like a thoroughbred, answered the reporter:

"What do we do? Well," he explained, "we go about showing the British flag, and try to cheer up the British colonies in various parts."

"Do they need cheering up?" another barbarian Yankee asked.

"Yes, indeed," said the Admiral. "I think everyone needs cheering up now."

Nobly answered, general, but was it war? Would Nelson have answered thus, or Clive, or the Prince of Wales? Despite your long proud solid name, are you a defeatist about the British Empire? Really, you might have kept up a stoic gentlemanly front, and not spilled it all to a reporter. After all, every empire is entitled to a few secrets. What if some Irishmen other than that deaf and dumb Mayor had heard you?

Wait till Queen Victoria and Ramsay Macdonald hear about this, Admiral. Giving away secrets, that way, you rascal, you!

GHOST TOWNS AND BOOTLEG MINERS

It was a familiar sight in America a few years ago to come suddenly upon towns that were as silent as cemeteries. The sun would be shining brightly on churches, banks, dance halls, restaurants, homes. But the congregation had vanished, the tellers had disappeared, the hostesses taken their pumps and smiles away, the cooks gone, the tenants forgotten. In the streets grass grew between the pavements. Rats slept in the bedrooms. Bats and wild birds rang the big bell in the church steeple.

The towns had died. They were ghosts of stone and wood left behind when a vein of ore had given out in the mountains. The gold or silver or lead had dribbled out and the operators had gone elsewhere seeking profit and the merchants had driven over the hills looking for new business and the miners had trekked away after new jobs. Only the towns, silent and mournful, were left be-

hind as a weird memory that men had once worked and lived there.

But now there are new ghost towns in America. Dead villages, and communities slowly dying. But not because ore has given out, not because the veins have been exhausted. In Oklahoma there are thousands of miners who are perishing from a slow, invisible death today while all around them lies the means of life.

Coal and iron towns these are, towns where the operators have shut down the mines because no profit exists for them in a closed and dying market. The shafts have been closed and flooded, the men thrown out of work, and slowly, inevitably the people have been left to perish. They are dying not because of scarcity (the coal and iron lies in abundance in the hills) but because the corporations can no longer find it profitable to mine coal. Gas, electricity, oil, and the crisis of capitalism, the shrinking markets, have boarded up the shafts. Death has followed a shrinking profit.

In the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania, the same process had been at work. In the Shamokin area, the great Pennsylvania and Reading Coal and Iron Company abandoned all but one of its collieries, and left over eight thousand miners and their families without work and without hope. They flooded the great galleries. They left the huge coal-breaker to rust. They left the cables of the hoists to rot in wind and rain. There was no profit for the shareholders in the mines at Shamokin.

But when the Pennsylvania and Reading Coal and Iron shut its shafts, a strange new industry came to take its place. The miners were starving and desperate. All the hills, the mountains, the land and property were owned by the Company. They had nothing but their old tools

and their hunger. But there was coal there, good hard coal near the surface.

So the miners of Shamokin took their tools, shovels, axes, hand-drills, rope, pulleys, dynamite and began to open coal-holes in the black mountains. They began to mine their own coal. In bands of three or four, they dug thirty and forty feet caves in the hills, lowered themselves in old battered tubs with the help of pulleys, and dynamited the black rock out of the earth. They screened and cleaned it themselves, then piled it on trucks and drove it for sale to the cities.

They became "bootleg" coal miners.

They worked with crude, primitive instruments and tools. They rigged up weird, home-made coal-breakers. They clawed and plugged at the earth with their old tools and their hands. They returned to a primitive beginning of coal-mining. Meanwhile the huge, modern coal-breakers of steel and concrete stood idle, coal-breakers that could clean from 2,000 to 10,000 tons of coal a day, while the miners can do at most from fifteen to thirty tons.

Instinctively the miners had taken back what had been stolen from them generations ago by the coal operators, the earth and the coal in it.

But though the property lay idle, the Company made desperate efforts to break the "bootlegging." They sent the Coal and Iron Police to drive the miners away from their crude holes. They blasted the holes. They threatened the miners. The city administrations attempted to stop the delivery of coal to the city. They slapped down huge license fees. Philadelphia put a $75 fee down. Baltimore and Wilmington $200 fees.

But the miners returned to the holes after they were blasted and re-opened them. Sometimes they fought with

the police and took their fuses and dynamite away from them and used them for mining. They formed an Independent Miners Association and voted to boycott merchandise manufactured in Philadelphia. They refused to surrender the crude holes they had dug for themselves in the black mountains and from which they kept their families alive.

Today it is estimated there are from twenty to thirty thousand men and boys who are working at the "bootleg" mines. Around the early "bootlegging" there has grown up producers co-operatives, little groupings of miners, who are proud of the fact that they can work with no boss over them. But dangerous symptoms are also at work. Merchants have formed themselves into groups to control mines. Truckers and coal-breakers have become necessary parts of the process of production and distribution. There are even signs of wage-scales, according to reports. What may develop from these "bootleg" mines may be the repetition of the seizure of the mines by business men just as the coal-operators seized the big mines.

But it is impossible for the miners to forget the fact that once they did go into the hills and mine the coal for themselves. And they worked for a time with no bosses. And they made it pay. They had taken back the earth and the coal in it, the coal that is rightfully theirs.

STRAW FOR THE HUNGRY

THERE was a convention of scientific dietitians here in New York. These college graduates, these ladies and gentlemen of intellect, made a startling announcement.

As the result of years of research, they said, they had discovered that an unemployed family of five could live on eight dollars a week, by adopting a scientific diet.

It figures out to twenty-three cents a person per day. I was not present at the convention, but all of us know what official dietitians look like. You will never confuse them with the unemployed; these ladies and gentlemen all have sleek, unwrinkled bellies and spend a great deal more than twenty-three cents a day on their own diet.

One can understand the pride with which they made their announcement that an American citizen can live safely on twenty-three cents a day.

Such people, in their own very petty bourgeois way, are as remote from the masses as Marie Antoinette. The unlucky Queen of France who lost her pretty head was not taunting the people of Paris when she made her famous remark, "Let them eat cake." It was simply that she was so isolated from life. Some courtier had told her the masses were shouting for bread. This really touched the sympathies of the good Queen Marie Antoinette. She wanted to help them, somehow. Naively, she murmured the first thing that came into her empty head: "If they have no bread, why don't they eat cake?" She must have been hurt and surprised when this casual remark became a revolutionary legend, and finally unloosed the latch of a guillotine over her.

The dietitians are as well-disposed and ignorant as Marie Antoinette. One can understand them all too well; they probably have the feeling that they have helped the unemployed, by teaching them how to sustain life on twenty-three cents a day.

After all, a scientist must specialize. The problem is given to a dietitian; here are twenty million Americans on

relief, averaging, let us say, twenty-three cents a day (though millions don't get even that). Many unemployed waste this money. They don't know how to balance their diets, never having gone to college. As a result, millions of them are undernourished, and disease is rampant.

Are you not helping them, therefore, by solving the problem for them, and teaching them to adapt themselves to twenty-three cents a day? That's what the dietitians think, and in their dim skulls they must wonder why the unemployed are not grateful, but hate their dumb guts.

Let me try to explain in words of one syllable to these morons of unimaginative science why they are hated. Maybe a few of them will be inclined to leave their ivory tower laboratories and take a peek at real America, and the starving people for whom they have prepared these diets.

To begin with, O stupid, smug scientists, the American people have been led to believe that this was a land of wealth and opportunity, and that American citizens were better than coolies.

They don't like the calm way you assume that twenty-three cents a day is a living wage for Americans. They don't like the way you calmly assume that they ought to adapt themselves to a coolie standard of living.

They don't want anyone to teach them the technique of being a coolie. You yourselves would not be grateful if we tried to put you on a twenty-three-cent diet, even though we said we were helping you. You would be very indignant, being college graduates and all. So the first lesson is, this is a democracy, and a bricklayer's kids are as good as your own, and what is good enough for your kids should be the right of his.

For secondly, that is exactly what you are conspiring

to do when you say a man or his child can live on twenty-three cents a day. You are giving your scientific approval to the bankers' mayors who so grudgingly hand out relief. You are telling them that twenty-three cents a day is enough for anyone to live on. You are directly sabotaging the fight of the unemployed for a living wage standard of relief. Why shouldn't they hate you? Instead of pointing out that the present relief wages are undermining the health of America, you help the wealth-swollen bankers by bringing "scientific" evidence to prove that nobody is starving.

And lastly, O dull and obedient servants of capitalism, every victim of unemployment knows that you are a gang of liars. They haven't checked up on your lies in the laboratory, but in their own bodies and souls.

Perhaps a dog can live on twenty-three cents a day. Maybe a man can live on it. But life isn't worth living at that standard for a man. A man who loves his children and wife wants the roses of life for them as well as the scientific rice and turnip you offer.

Kids don't thrive on rations; every mother knows that to have them grow beautiful and strong, they must be allowed to gorge like lusty young animals. And kids ought to have roller skates, and candy, and a visit to the circus, and books, and toy locomotives; they need this as much as rice.

And a man wants tobacco, now and then, and to take his family to a movie, and beefsteak and beer to raise his spirits, and it's hell to wear shabby, patched-up clothes forever, and it breaks the pride of a man to live on prison-rations.

You are liars. An American cannot live on twenty-three cents a day. He may continue to drag his body around

for a while on that sum, but everything else will have died for him that makes life normal and good. He will fight and hate you and your paymasters before he accepts your "scientific diet."

May the day come soon, you bourgeois dietitians, when you are unemployed yourselves, and are reduced to eating your own cruel, starvation diet. Is it not a wish that makes you shudder, you unimaginative bureaucrats?

A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR OF A FIRST BOOK

Dear Friend and Comrade Jack: Your novel * was assigned me for review. I began to write my report in the graveyard style of the *Nation* or *New Republic* book-spetz but soon found I couldn't keep on in that vein.

How can I pretend to be one of these Olympian arbiters of "truth" when as a matter of fact I am deeply partial to you and your work? A first book like yours, of a young working class author, cannot be regarded merely as literature. To me it is a significant class portent. It is a victory against capitalism. Out of the despair, mindlessness and violence of the proletarian life, thinkers and leaders arise. Each time one appears it is a revolutionary miracle. I shall never grow "sophisticated" enough to witness this miracle with anything but joy.

So I am deeply glad that you have written and published a novel at last. Why conceal it? I myself went to work at the age of twelve, and I think I know what it means to create one's own literary tools and one's own courage. It is

* *The Disinherited,* by Jack Conroy.

something academicians rarely can understand, sometimes not even when their academy calls itself Marxist. When Negroes, Tartars and Bashkirs, when ditch-diggers, textile weavers or graduates of steel mills like yourself begin to write novels and poems, something great has been born. A new world has begun to create its own life; the first log huts have been carved out of a wilderness.

Proletarian literature is in its first crude beginnings in America. We shall have to know how to understand the inevitable crudity of our first rough-hewn shelters, and their relation to the shining cities of tomorrow. The fact that a revolutionary school of writers is arising in the cornlands of the Middle West, taking the place of the tired social-democrats of the school of Carl Sandburg, is something that critics ought to understand about your novel. You are one of the leaders of this movement, and your book is an advance-guard skirmish in the great battle.

The first scouts in a new terrain can do little more than hurriedly map the main landmarks. One does not expect them to be serene landscape painters. Your novel shows the internal stress of the man under fire or the young proletarian author writing a first report of a strange life. There are too many unprecedented facts, and he is so involved in each one, that sometimes he cannot piece them together in any satisfactory pattern. Hence, the sketch-form which predominates in your book, and which is a dominant proletarian form today.

For it is noteworthy that your novel has many of the same faults and virtues as other first novels by proleterians. It is semi-autobiographic, which is a virtue. However, in avoiding the sickly introspection of the bourgeois autobiographers of youth, the psychological reality often

escapes our young authors. They neglect the major problem of all fiction, which is the creation of full-blooded character. Your characters aren't completed.

To illustrate by a parallel: there have been many novels written about the first World War. As one war book after another appeared it was apparent that those authors who chronicled only the objective facts of war's horror and violence had written monotonously. Horror is not enough. Facts are not enough. There must be a living human man portrayed through whose mind all this is reflected. War must do something to him that other human beings can poignantly feel.

Proletarian life is a war. The hero of your novel, Larry Donovan, is the son of a coal miner. One by one his brothers are killed in the mine, his father, too. His mother becomes a heroic drudge who bears on her shoulders the weight of a family. You create in a few strokes of fine talent the portrait of this universal mother of proletarians, stoic and haggard and loving, stooped over a washtub where the tears and sweat of her slow death are mingled.

The boy leaves the coal camp. His father has been ambitious for him, with the pathetic petty-bourgeois hopes that poison the workers' soul in America. The boy wants to be a white-collar man. But he drifts from one industrial hell-hole to another. He works in a stinking rubber factory, where dust rots the lungs in a few months. He works at a murderous saw. He passes through steel mills and road camps, he is one of the floating millions of migratories who are characteristic of American industry. There is no escape for him, any more than for the other millions.

The boy meets the drifters, the failures, the drab

women and crushed hopeless men who are called by patriots the American "people." Some significance is brought into all this chaos when Larry encounters a German Spartacist in the rubber factory. Hans is class-conscious, though broken by temporary defeat. And he shares his class wisdom with the youngster, and at the end the two participate in one of the farm revolts.

All this is a truthful report of the steps by which most young workers enter the revolution. Nothing has been invented. You know this life, Jack, as well as a Hemingway knows the atmosphere of fifty Paris bistres. You have given us a picture of a boy's life in a coal-mining town which I have never seen before. I can smell your rubber mill, and have been bored to madness by the work-sodden people in your rooming-houses.

Violent death and gray, heart-breaking monotony, these are the main elements of war and of proletarian life. You have given the facts, Jack, but why could you not communicate the emotion as well? You, of the warm tragic Irish blood, had it in you. What held you back? Was it a fear of the autopsy that might be performed on you by some pseudo-scientific Marxians? Don't ever fear them, Jack; Marx and Lenin were men of passion and wisdom, and knew that life comes first, in fiction as in politics, and then the theories. Or was it a fear of the bourgeois critic? They have destroyed many a young proletarian writer; they have made us ashamed of being our proletarian selves. They call our love and hate, propaganda; and they are too smug and cowardly to understand what Gorky called "the madness of the brave." To dream of pleasing them is a form of suicide for a proletarian writer.

I really believe that a faithful study of Marx and Lenin would help our young proletarian writers more than any

laboring over the "pure" bourgeois aesthetes like Joseph Wood Krutch and the like. This has been said by unimaginative routineers so often that it has almost become repellent. Nevertheless, it happens to be true. I can point out one defect in your novel which might have been obviated by a study of Marx.

To capture some of that unpredictable variety and romance which one finds even in the darkest depths of life, you have been led off the main road leading to your goal. In your novel too many of the characters are social sports and eccentrics. They are not typical enough. It isn't easy to fuse the typical and the individual in one true and breathing portrait, and yet that is our chief fictional problem. A knowledge of the structure of society is found in Marx, and Marx alone. He can help the writer attain the fusion I have described.

Your book reminds one of the early work of Jack London. You have his stalwart, easy familiarity with the American worker. You have his ear for the natural idiom of proletarian speech. The same dynamic rebellion and red-blooded poetry is in your style. You lack as yet his feeling for powerful dramatic form. And you have, I believe, what was always his chief fault, the one that destroyed him in the end: a subconscious sense of inferiority to the bourgeois world.

It is a common trait in the young proletarian struggling for self-education. You over-value the decayed culture of the other world. Your hero, sunk in hopeless and mindless poverty, is naive enough to spout, in a nightmare rubber mill, some tinkling rhymes by a conventionally minor poet named Arthur Ficke. Your boy does this with reverence, and it is a false note that is repeated again and again. He is "literary" in the way of Jack

London, the "literariousness" that begins by believing that to mouth a few lush stanzas by Swinburne makes one superior to illiterate drill press hands and factory girls. This snobbishness usually ends, as it did with London, in believing that the *Saturday Evening Post* is the eternal standard of literature, and that the U. S. ought to annex Mexico.

But I know you will never succumb to the ignoble success that led to the mental and then physical suicide of Jack London. You have Revolution in your bones. You are making immense personal sacrifices to create a Midwest proletarian literature through the medium of your magazine, the *Anvil*. You have written a first good book. It now belongs in the galaxy of the young literature of our class. You will write many more books and better ones. You are a leader. You are a writer. You are a proletarian shock-trooper whose weapon is literature. Nothing is easy for our class, but it is only in a hard school that greatness is tempered. Your book is a signal that you aspire to that greatness.

DEAR BISHOP BROWN

It is some months since Bishop William Montgomery Brown, that grand old champion of American freedom, sent me a check for twenty-five dollars, and said, in effect, "I am troubled by a recent essay of yours on religion. Do you think that my own writing hurts the revolutionary movement? If so, I wish you would tell me honestly. It ought to take you a week to read through my collected works. Someone ought to pay you for such a job, and I am therefore enclosing this check."

That's the kind of big-hearted square shooter our good Bishop is. He recognizes that reading and writing, professionally, is a job. Many of our comrades think it is a form of self-indulgence.

Well, I have read through the books, Comrade Bishop. I asked the business office to return the check to you, because, dear Comrade, I don't need to be paid to read your books.

Comrade Bishop, books like yours, and your whole life-work have been a great inspiration to thousands upon thousands of Americans. Suppose that I or anybody else disagrees with details of your philosophy. Supposing we say that it is our belief that science and religion can never be reconciled; or that it is futile to try to convert the religious symbolism into some sort of Communist symbolism.

What of it? Our disagreement with you is unimportant compared with all that vast body of truth in which we all agree with you.

Liberals often accuse the Communists of being heresy-hunters. This comes from the fact that Communists have always fought against the adulteration and dilution of Marxism.

We know how dangerous that is. We know what becomes of all these bright young gentlemen who pop up every few years with bright schemes for eliminating the class struggle from Marxism. See what this revisionism cost the German and Austrian Social-Democratic workers.

But in every land there are millions of workers and middle-class people who are completely disgusted with the sordidness, greed and brutality of capitalism. They want something better, and grope through all the philosophic jungles hunting for it.

Many of them are good Jews, good Christians, church people. They take the words of Moses and Jesus seriously. You are a spokesman of this great section of modern society, my dear Bishop. That is why the words you have uttered have had a high importance, for you have been pioneering in a new world; attempting to show how the serious, human sentiments of church people can find their proper outlet in struggle for a better world here and now.

Communism does not mean the destruction of all tradition. It means, as is being proven in the Soviet Union, the fulfilment of all that was finest in human history.

One of the basic tenets of sincere religious people has always been the brotherhood of man. Did not Jesus preach this, and St. Francis, St. Augustine, Tolstoy, Novalis, Emerson, Theodore Parker, Father Hecker, all the others on the shining roll of the great spirits, for whom religion was not a matter of empty ritual, but a passion of the heart?

Religious leaders like Bishop Brown are springing up all over the world to save the church-going people from their worst enemies, the false pastors and priests who worship Mammon.

Millions of sincere people are beginning to question a church that is on the side of the rich, on the side of race bigotry, imperialism, and war.

The revolt of the German churches against Hitler is a blazing reminder that brotherhood is not yet forgotten among the followers of Jesus.

The anti-war and anti-capitalist feeling among church people in America is another example. Our good friends, the liberal parsons, have even begun to earn the highest honor that can come to an honest man; Hearst has commenced to call them Reds.

Bishop Brown, you are a standard-bearer in this great upheaval.

There is a vulgar bourgeois type of atheist that to me, at least, has always been slightly disgusting. They have nothing to offer the people but negation.

Many of these professional atheists are bitterly anti-Communist. They are, in the true sense of the word, people who care only for the belly-gods. If the Communists deny God, it is in the name of a fairer and freer humanity, a world that needs no opium for its man-made grief. But the professional god-killers deny God only in order to debase humanity, and make us all kin to the wolf.

CHICAGO, CITY OF BLOOD

The streets of Chicago are familiar with blood. The gangsters have staged their civil wars on every boulevard. They have quarreled over Chicago as over a luscious bone.

Nothing can stop this while capitalism lasts. If fascism clears up the situation it will be by putting the gangsters into uniform, as did Hitler and Mussolini, and turning them loose on the workers. All gangsters are religious and patriotic, of course.

Bourgeois Chicagoans like to show visitors the famous sites where some well-known gangster met his fate, the machine-gun bullets still imbedded in nearby walls. They are proud of their gangsters in Chi, the way some New Yorkers are proud of Jimmy Walker and Al Smith.

Horatio Alger has prepared the American mind to admire any kind of money-success. Is there a businessman who doesn't wish he had the nerve to go out and make money as easily as Al Capone and the big shots?

The winds of Chicago are familiar with blood. From those death-factories, the packinghouses, there is wafted day and night a putrid exhalation, the smell of millions of sheep and pigs weltering in gore.

Last summer I walked through Packinghouse City. There was a great shrieking noise on this hot day. I thought it came from some factory filled with the movement of machinery and squeak of many conveyor-belts. But it was the continuous death-shriek of thousands of pigs having their throats cut—a fearful cry.

In one of these dark infernal chambers big wide-horned cattle moved down a chute, and as they passed by, a giant executioner felled each steer with a sledge-hammer. The blow was accurate and powerful, and the steer collapsed in a scramble of legs and horns.

And on another conveyor line sheep hung from their heels, baaing pitifully, and had their throats cut. One escaped and ran about the dark death chamber, bleeding like a fountain. The killer ran after him, his rubber boots slipping in a flood of gore. The trembling lamb died without any further struggle.

Blood, blood! The packers pride themselves on the sanitation, and have a tour for visitors. But nothing can hide that deathly smell that hangs over everything, and nothing can refine the raw bloody murder that has to be done.

I talked later to some killers in the killing room. They didn't like the work, nor did they hate it. They were used to it—it was a job. There are worse jobs in free America at which free Americans must slave to keep their dear ones alive.

Behind the packinghouses one finds the quarter of the Mexican workers. They were brought here by the thousands by the blood-bosses, during the boom time. They

were brought in to further divide the workers on the race question, to undercut the wages.

Now the bosses don't need them. So they are being herded like cattle, shipped in great ragged hungry gangs back to their own country.

Is there any more miserable slum in the world than this Mexican quarter? The muddy shacks have never been painted or repaired, they are not better than those found in the shantytowns of the unemployed. Light and gas have long been disconnected in many of these hovels. The streets are stinking cesspools, where little black-eyed Mexican boys and girls must play.

Mexico is no heaven for its workers, I know. I can remember the fleas, the lice, the typhoid of that romantic country. But this is worse. How pale and enervated they look, these Mexican workers. They are the bravest fighters in the world, real men. But Chicago seems to have taken the spirit out of them. The blood has been squeezed out of their veins to make Chicago prosperous.

The Negro of Chicago will yet prove the leader of his people. He is a fearless giant, he doesn't run cabarets for white slummers. He makes steel; he is a killer in the killing-rooms. He has been hammered in a hard school and is a proletaire.

The white masters of Chicago fear him. The race riots are still a living memory, and the Chicago Negro defended himself valiantly in those riots. He takes nothing lying down.

The South Side has a higher percentage of unemployment than any section of white workers. And in all the parks there are forums where Communism is discussed. In many churches and halls meetings are held nightly. Or-

ganization is the magic word. The unemployed councils see that nobody is evicted.

The cops have turned their machine guns on these workers of the South Side. But they have fought back. Their blood also has stained the streets of bloody Chicago.

Steel mills girdle this city, steel towns where unrest mutters today. Beyond them leagues of prairie land, and thousands of farmers waking up from their long American dream to find chains on their hands and feet. Farm revolt! Farmers marching on their enemy, the banker and entrepreneur! Something unknown since 1776. And the blood of farmers, too, is smelled on the heavy winds that sweep through Chicago.

Yes, it is the city of drama. It is a city of great class conflicts, the city where the Haymarket martyrs were hanged, and the workers' red May Day was born.

All the railroads make this their central point. This is the capital of every proletarian struggle in America. Workers walk down La Salle Street in overalls, and look at the proud buildings, and swear, some day workers' blood will not flow in Chicago streets.

And this is the city whose bourgeoisie is said to be the most "aesthetic" in America. It has a Greenwich Village like New York—not as big, perhaps, but certainly more arty. There are many art galleries, where old maids exhibit their flower paintings. And Miss Harriet Monroe has been running a little poetry magazine there for years. She is a kindly soul, and can't stand much harshness in her literature.

Floyd Dell and Harry Hansen also come from that city of blood and melodrama. They too favor the delicacies of literature, and can never prove unkind.

Carl Sandburg came nearest to hearing a few beats

of the rugged proletarian heart of Chicago, that city destined to be the capital of a Soviet America. There were others. Ben Hecht, Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, Maxwell Bodenheim. But the job still waits to be done. And here is the finest thing you can say for the necessity of proletarian literature—only this school of writers will be hard and clear enough to really grapple with the blood-stained truth about Chicago.

JOHN REED'S ANNIVERSARY

The anniversary of John Reed comes around again. It will be celebrated in the Soviet Union and in America and in other lands. John Reed, this young American reporter who died of typhus in the Russian Revolution, has become an international legend.

In the Soviet Union he occupies the position held by Lafayette in the history of the American revolution, a gallant, great-hearted volunteer from another land, who brought his youth and his talents to the cause of freedom.

Believe it or not, you cheap little Willie Hearsts of America, they like Americans in the Soviet Union, despite the tribe of willie-hearsts who foul the name of America.

America and Russia are both big continents with vast spaces and a pioneering tradition. Our west has bred the same kind of powerful, easy-going giants with the instinct of self-help and democracy in his very bones that one finds by the million in the new Russia. Meet one of these Americans in the Soviet Union, and if he is wearing a Russian outfit, as everyone does in winter, at least, you cannot tell him from the Russians.

John Reed was of this type, a true son of his father, who was a brave and honest United States Marshal in Oregon who went down fighting against the big corporations.

The Russians liked John Reed, not only because he was a revolutionist, and a great writer, but because he was this kind of American; adventurous, open-handed, democratic, with the air of the pioneer of great continents.

They could understand him, and he could understand them, better than either land understands Europe. Lenin, terribly busy at the helm of the greatest upheaval in history, found time to see John Reed often, and to like him immensely, with the affection of an older brother.

This was told me by Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, when I interviewed her in Moscow in 1930.

The dirty little willies of our land do not scorn any weapon with which to defame the Soviet Union; but the manure of slander, lies and innuendo, is their favorite ammunition at present.

Thus about a year ago the Heart press presented the dirty fairy-stories, typical enough of a so-called "Socialist" who had returned from the Soviet Union, bitterly "disillusioned" with it all, and glad to be back safe in the kindly arms of Hearst and Morgan.

I forget this particular one's name; does it matter, call him Fred Beal, or Isaac Don Levine, or Eugene Lyons, or what you will, even rat; the breed is all alike, except for differences in refinement and grammar.

Well, this one had a great scoop to reveal. It seems that he had talked to many people in Russia who knew John Reed. And they told him, the rat, that John Reed also was bitterly "disillusioned" with the Soviet revolution, just before he died.

If he had lived, reported the rat eagerly, John Reed would have returned to America and exposed the "tyrants." John Reed, in short, was not John Reed at all, but Isaac Don Levine, a Hearst at heart.

Is it necessary to answer such cheap lies? They pile up faster than one can answer them; yet just for the record, I would like to point out that John Reed contracted the typhus from which he died on a trip to Baku.

There he had addressed a congress of oriental peoples, the first of its kind, and had made an eloquent speech exhorting them to cast off the chains of colonial oppression.

I talked to an old comrade who had come back on the train with Reed from Baku. At one point the train was attacked by White guard bandits.

A squad of Red Army men on the train unlimbered machine guns and put them on carts, and set off toward the nearby hills to dislodge the bandits.

Jack Reed, who could never stay out of a fight, insisted on going along, and the Red Army boys took him. He was full of high spirits and enthusiasm, and laughed as he rode off. Does this seem like the picture of a "disillusioned Socialist" and bootlicker of fascist Hearst?

John Reed is a legend. But he was also a human being who made mistakes, chiefly as a result of his background, perhaps, in American bourgeois life. There are darn few saints in this world, and fewer perfect revolutionists. We are all products of a historic period, and like all human beings, a mass of contradictions.

But the fundamentals of character count in the long run. When all is said, John Reed is worthy of his legend—this splendid, heroic, gifted youth, the daredevil American pioneer who wrote like an Oregon angel, and never could

resist an adventure, and always had his heart in the right place, on the side of the working class.

Re-read the one sure classic this youth who died at thirty-three left to his revolutionary posterity. *Ten Days That Shook the World.* It is a first-hand picture of the Russian Revolution, written in the very trenches. Twenty years later it shows not only the great, romantic spirit of this poet turned revolutionist, but also the sound, shrewd intellectual core that made John Reed so different from a Richard Harding Davis and Floyd Gibbons.

MY FRIEND IS DEAD

A SQUAD of Nazi Brown Shirts called at a Berlin prison with an order for the delivery of four workers whom they were to convey to Potsdam.

The Brown Shirts were the typical mercenaries the new regime has enlisted; men with hard, dissolute faces, cold, animal eyes, and the swagger of killers who like their jobs; people below humanity, but useful to capitalism.

America is full of them, too; they make up the strike-breaking armies; they are deputy sheriffs, professional lynchers, kidnappers, prison wardens, gunmen and racketeers. The plentiful flower and fruit, these are, of a predatory society; and in a time of fascism, the chief bulwark of the state.

They took away the four workers, who were Communists named John Scheer, Erich Steinfurth, Rudolf Schwartz and Eugen Schoenhaar.

The gunmen were to conduct them to Potsdam, ostensibly to be examined in preparation for the trial of

Ernest Thaelmann, the Hamburg longshoreman who is the leader of the German Communist Party.

En route, their big limousine stopped in the snow-laden depths of a forest. The gangsters pushed the manacled prisoners out into the snow and told them to run. The Communists, their faces pale, knew immediately what was transpiring. They threw back their shoulders, and faced the killers. "Run!" sneered the Brown Shirts, "run, you swine, we are giving you a chance for your lives!" They did not run, but solemnly sang the *Internationale*. And the gunmen cursed and gibbered, and shot them down. They shot them and spat at them and kicked the limp bodies.

They then gulped slugs of the whisky they had taken along. They boasted heroically and drunkenly, slapped each other on the back. They had done their job. They had earned a bonus for this day's bloody work. Hitler and Goering would be pleased; might even give them a raise in pay or a medal.

This, a daily occurrence in bleeding Germany, was reported in the *Daily Worker*. Four more German workers had been murdered by the Brown Shirts while "trying to escape."

I read this account, and my heart skipped a beat when I saw the name of Eugen Schoenhaar.

It was more than the name of a brave fellow-worker to me; it was the name of a dear friend.

About four years ago Eugen Schoenhaar spent a year in this country as the representative of the German Section of the International Labor Defense. He was here to coordinate the work of this organization; to guarantee that such cases as Scottsboro, for instance, would not become merely an "American affair," but a cause with which to rouse the workers of the world.

The capitalist rulers of the world are nationalists; they are plunging the world into new wars of sectional hate. But the interests of the workers are international; and whoever departs from this fundamental truth, is sure to end in treachery to the workers.

Eugen was on a most important mission; and he did some splendid organizational work in his own quiet manner.

But he had little money to live on, despite all this talk of "Moscow gold." In fact he had no room rent; and he and his wife came to live at my home.

For several months I saw them at breakfast every morning; and sometimes, when Eugen had an evening free, we would eat our suppers and talk and enjoy each other's companionship.

There is so much hypocrisy and lying sentimental camouflage in the capitalist world that Communists do not often mention the words friendship, affection, love. The words have been so cheapened by all the lynching parsons and double crossing politicians and profiteers of capitalism that perhaps it is better to wait until there is a really fair and just socialist world before one repeats these words, too.

But Eugen Schoenhaar, an active and disciplined leader of the Communist movement, was one of the finest human beings I have ever met. Let me say it though it may count only a fraction in the heavy scales of Nazi crime. He was one of those rare friends whose presence makes you happy. His work came first; he averaged sixteen and eighteen hours a day. He had no feeling of self or egotism in this work; the movement was his life, and what hurt Communism, hurt him, as keenly as a body-wound.

He came from a family of Berlin workers; his father,

his brothers and himself had worked in the German steel mills. But he was this new type of humanity in the world, the proletarian intellectual, and he had hammered out a thorough education for himself. I enjoyed his calm, rational, far-sighted approach to world problems. I enjoyed, too, the surprising sensitivity this steel worker had for poetry, the theatre, all the arts.

He had taught himself English and French, and had read the best modern fiction and poetry in three languages. He could recite more poetry than I, presumably a professional writer, could ever have remembered. And he knew hundreds of songs and played the guitar.

I got hold of an accordion and taught him many of the American revolutionary songs. We had many a midnight concert at home, with accordion, guitar and wine.

Eugen developed a great fondness for the American worker. He traveled through the middle-west, and visited many of the steel and mining towns, and came back full of enthusiasm.

"The American worker has an unspoiled revolutionary spirit." "He is like some young bewildered genius, waiting to find his true direction."

Eugen often said he would like to come back and live in America for a few years to learn about this country. He made me promise him we would take a long trip across the continent, and see it all from a worker's point of view. But now they have murdered him, and he will never make this trip.

He was fond of telling stories about his proletarian family. His brother had been reported missing in the world war. But he came back one day, minus a leg. The mother began to weep, but Eugen's brother picked up his old accordion and began to play and sing.

"Cheer up, mother, I'm alive, and there's many a good fight left in me yet," he roared, trying to keep the tears from his own eyes. And soon the mother laughed, too, she could not resist his lusty spirit. That was Eugen's spirit, too; he was a cheerful, brave, generous fighter, a man good to the core.

But now the Brown Shirt assassins have murdered him, as they are trying to kill all that is best in their land.

MR. CARNEGIE, WE'RE NOT GRATEFUL!

THE one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Andrew Carnegie was celebrated recently, with concerts and meetings, in New York, Pittsburgh and Scotland.

It is significant that only the crème de la crème of capitalist society gathered in these festivals. Present were college presidents, bourgeois politicos, scads of millionaires and their bediamonded wives, trained-seal writers, kept musicians and intellectuals, professional high-salaried reformers and the like.

Not a worker or farmer attended any of these parties, at which a fulsome oratory flowed. Least of all a steel worker, and it was from steel that the shrewd little Scot, a financier more than a steel man, drew his amazing fortune.

The talk was all of sweet charity, and the noble benefactions of Andrew Carnegie.

It is true that Carnegie was an enlightened millionaire, one of the most unusual of that dull and unimaginative tribe. He gave a major part of his wealth to found public libraries, to support universities, symphony orchestras and

churches. He spent a fortune on the bourgeois peace movement; it was his money that built the peace palace at The Hague.

All this was cited by the orators as the living monument of this extraordinary millionaire. But what nobody mentioned was that Carnegie also left behind him hundreds of filthy steel towns, slums where almost a million human beings and their children live.

The steel workers have little to thank Carnegie for, but perpetual poverty, disease, feudal towns where free speech has long been dead, twelve-hour shifts, company unions, company thugs, company fascism.

Is there a mightier force degrading American manhood and democracy today than the Steel Trust? And Andrew Carnegie was the founding father of that trust. But no dress-suited speaker breathed the fact at the celebrations.

The occasion was seized for political purposes by a certain Douglas Freeman, described as the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1935. Speaking in Pittsburgh, within sight and sound of the steel-hells, Mr. Freeman presented the Liberty League theory that great wealth should not be taxed in this country, as is being threatened, because otherwise, who would support the hospitals, colleges and public libraries?

Taxing the rich will ruin America, Mr. Freeman said, and might even lead to autocracy (if you can follow such strange and weasel logic). "The profound truth which Flinders Petrie has established from the ruins of Egypt," said this trained-seal scholar, "is that the tendency of a democracy is to eat itself up and then swing back to an autocracy." In other words, if you tax the industrial autocrats, you destroy democracy.

And Mr. Freeman called for a united front, wooing the

lower middle class to defense of the great fortune in these heart-breaking words:

"The destruction of the wealth of any class is an invitation to assail the wealth of those who have a little less, and then of those who have still less."

And so on, ad infinitum. It is like Mark Twain's warning against committing murder: you begin by killing someone, then you take to liquor, then you sink down and down until you become a chronic smoker.

The steel workers will begin by asking for taxes on the Steel Trust; then they will demand high taxes on the $5,000 a year white collar workers; then they will end by taxing themselves to death and ruination. It don't make sense, but it is typical enough Wall Street demagogy, of the sort we must hear and read these days.

These well-fed, well-clothed people at the celebrations spoke a great deal of the gratitude all of us feel to Carnegie, who gave his wealth for these many charities.

If they took a voting test, I think they would find that most Americans aren't very grateful.

Mr. Carnegie was a well-meaning man, but not even a saint should have the right to make a charity of education and science.

They are community matters. Society owes wealth and comfort to every man who has worked, and it owes an education to every child born in its midst. These are not philanthropies, but public necessities, like sanitation and the post office.

And wealth is not created by any individual, however shrewd and talented, but by the community. Would there have been no steel produced if there were no Carnegie, Schwab, Grace, or these other entrepreneurs? There cer-

tainly would have been; just as corn and wheat was grown, and will be grown, throughout the history of man, though the Wall Street stock market ceases to exist.

It is this community wealth that Carnegie was spending for community necessities. In his own unconscious way, he was trying to repair the damage done by the system that gave him wealth—or salve a Presbyterian conscience.

In the Soviet Union they are proving that a community can produce more steel than Carnegie without millionaires and profit-takers. It can produce steel without destroying the steel workers, without strikes, overwork, slums and darkness.

And this wealth is used to build the hospitals and colleges and orchestras. There are many more of them than Carnegie ever dreamed of. They are not tainted with the foul word, charity, millionaire's charity. They were created by all, they belong to all, they are free as the sun and wind. Nobody needs to be grateful to another for what was always his own.

THE HACKIES OF NEW YORK

It was on February 3, 1935, that 40,000 New York taxi drivers, (hackies, they call themselves) got up off their cab seats, and gave "liberal" Mayor LaGuardia a fine case of the typical "liberal" horrors by going on strike.

It was a most spectacular strike. New York has always been fond of its hackies. They are colorful, hard-boiled and humorous. What a seagull is to a beach, they are to the whirling raucous life of the big town. They seem to know everything; some hackie ought to write a guide to New York. They are the typical New Yorker, if there

is such an animal. But when they went on strike, the whole picture changed.

The patronizing aesthetes of the high-hat *New Yorker* had seemed to believe that hackies were some sort of clown in a burlesque show put on for their special amusement. But the strike revealed that the hackies were workers; exploited workers struggling on a miserable wage, persecuted by every little Mussolini cop, the slaves of greedy bosses, political racketeers, and license bureau dictators.

And what a battle those taxi lads put up. It was a strike of remarkable militancy, surprise tactics, wonderful solidarity, and deep, working class feeling. Some fine, earnest leaders like Joe Gilbert and Sam Orner developed out of the ranks. The hackies had brains. The hackies had guts. What is more, the hackies had a social vision—yeah, you wise-cracking, fur-bearing, hollow-souled, penthouse bums on the *New Yorker*, these hackies understand Marx, while you are still catching up with the comic strips!

Clifford Odets made a play of that strike, *Waiting for Lefty*. It has swept the country. The gifted young playwright caught the poetry deep in the slangy souls of these hackies. The militant hackie has become a symbol of New York's working class.

But the strike was sold out. It took a combination of fake liberals and "Old Guard" Socialists like Panken to split the ranks, and confuse the boys. It was their first strike, so it was fairly easy for the old, experienced madams of the labor struggle to mislead them.

A comrade who is a hackie writes in to tell me that the old militancy isn't dead, however. He names two recent incidents that prove this.

At the St. Moritz hotel the manager had the police remove the two-car hackstand, so as to make room for the

"phonies" who patronize the ritzy hostelry. The hackies resented this. Walter Winchell made some comment. The manager handed each hackie a letter in which he offered to replace the two-cab stand if they would be quiet and wear neat clothes.

On the back of the letters the men penned their reply. Each man wrote: "We will wear new and neater clothes if you will pay for them."

Also, in an East Side garage recently, the boss let loose a tirade of filthy abuse at one of the hackies whose earnings were not up to the mark.

The hackie was sick and tired of the whole game, and being cursed out by a cockroach capitalist was about the last straw. He grabbed the boss, and hauled him off to the toilet. There he put his head in the bowl, and pulled the chain, to teach him that cleanliness is next to godliness.

A cop came to the rescue, swinging his club. The hackie defended himself lustily, and as a result, more cops were called, and the hackie got thirty days in the cooler.

But he is convinced it was worth it.

A correspondent adds a list of new phrases in the hackie slang. Hackies create a great deal of the rich, ever-changing slang of New York. It is interesting to find the class struggle reflected in some of their slang.

Here are a few examples:

"Slaughterhouse"—that means the Hack Bureau, where the men are virtually slaughtered as far as making a living is concerned, by the continual chiselling and persecution of the city bureaucrats, who take the hackies' licenses from them on the slightest provocation.

"Foreign Legion" and "outlaw garage" both mean a garage which has no blacklist. It specializes in employing men blacklisted for having been militant strikers and for

similar reasons. It does this not out of any charity, but because it figures that such men have no other place to work, and therefore can be exploited and ground-down more easily.

"High-hat," and "Park Avenue." That means, of course, the lofty rich. They put on aristocratic airs, but they never ride for more than about forty cents, and they rarely tip above a nickel.

A "chowder-head" is a dumb cop. "Rats" and "weasel" are those who are spies and informers for the boss. A "shylock" is a petty usurer who lends money to hackies—he gets a dollar interest on a five-dollar loan. "Vigorish" is the peculiar name for this interest. "Marked lousy" means being blacklisted. A "phoney" is a cheap tipless rider. The meter is a "dinger," and "stickup," and "one on the arm," and "one for the kid," mean when a hackie makes a call and forgets to let his meter register; which means he is taking the fare for himself, and letting the boss suffer for a change.

A "hound" is a hackie who works too hard. A "coffee pot hackman" is a lazy hackman, and a "coffee pot lawyer" is a hackie who argues all the time. A "showcase" is one of those cabs with extra-large windows; but a "muzzler" is a cab with small windows, the kind that amorous couples hunt for.

GRATEFUL DOG

He was an old dog, and he was full of old fleas. They had lived on him for years, and both he and they accepted the relationship as one of the laws of the dog-and-flea universe. Once in awhile, it is true, the lazy old hound

remembered to scratch at his fleas. With graceful skips and hops, however, in the manner of the people who perpetually travel from Newport to the Riviera and then to Miami, the fleas had always evaded him. One hot summer day they bothered him a great deal. Somehow, by a miracle, old Rover managed to track down a young flea and cripple him.

The fleas were indignant, and called a protest meeting. Measures of reprisal were discussed. Some of the younger hotheads proposed that martial law be declared on Rover. One of their leaders even proposed that old Rover be assassinated.

But Junius P. Rockerbilt, the oldest, wisest and best-fed flea among them all, smiled at this folly of the young.

"Execute Rover for his crime?" said the old flea-banker and art-collector. "I admit Rover deserves such punishment. But Brother Fleas, we need Rover, as much as he needs us. What is a cowboy without his horse? What is a Henry Ford without his workers? What is a flea without his dog?"

"We can find another dog, the world is full of dogs!" shouted the young militants.

"You are always at liberty to do so," said old Mr. Rockerbilt politely. "But I am an old man, and fond of peace. I have grown used to living on Rover. I suggest that we bring this matter to his attention, and demand some redress. It can all be done with arbitration. That is how it is done among the humans."

So Mr. Rockerbilt was chosen as the spokesman of the United Fleas and three of the next oldest fleas were named as an arbitration board to make an award for the damage done by Rover.

That night, while Rover was dozing by the fireplace, the

fleas solemnly travelled from his rump until they reached his left ear. Mr. Rockerbilt was the first to enter the ear, and to open negotiations.

"Ahem," he began, clearing his throat, importantly. "Perhaps you have forgotten who I am, Mr. Rover. I am the leader and spokesman of the United Fleas. In the name of our ancient organization, I have come to demand satisfaction to our honor for the grave injury you have done us."

Rover was startled and scared out of his wits. He was, like most dogs, only a lowbrow, and the flea-bankers and their fine clothes and stately bearing impressed him beyond words.

Mr. Rockerbilt's large resounding phrases and perfect grammar were beyond the ken of a mere hound like Rover.

"Jeez, Mr. Rockerbilt, I didn't mean to do nuttin," Rover stammered. "Dat flea, he got pickin' on me so much, I just tried to tell him to lay off, and me paw slipped and got him. Dat's de Gawd's truth, Mr. Rockerbilt."

"That does not excuse you, but slightly changes the charges," Mr. Rockerbilt said severely. "Instead of wilful mayhem, it is involuntary sedition you committed. But you were at fault in that the law explicitly makes it a crime for any dog to lift his paw against any flea."

"Yes, Mr. Rockerbilt," said Rover humbly. "But there oughta be a law, too, against fleas botherin' me when I'm taking me nap."

"Bolshevism!" Mr. Rockerbilt shouted, losing at once his remarkable calm of a life-time. "Did you hear that, gentlemen? He's been agitated by the man from Moscow! Call the police!"

"Listen," Rover pleaded, "dat ain't Bolshevism. Honest

it ain't. All I'm sayin' is, if I do sometin' for youse fleas, youse ought to do somethin' fer me, too, onct in a while. Don't de Bible say, live and let live?"

"Bolshevism!" shouted Mr. Rockerbilt. "Police! As if a dog ever did anything for a flea! Insolence, revolution! As if a dog could exist without fleas! Call the cops!"

"Don't get sore!" Rover pleaded. "I didn't mean to say nuttin'! I know me lesson! Fleas is the brains, and the dog is the brawn! Fleas is capital, and the dog is labor! The two should cooperate wid each other, like William Green and Franklin Roosevelt, dem human beings, puts it. I admit all dat, Mr. Rockerbilt, and I'm always cooperatin' wid youse, ain't I?"

But Mr. Rockerbilt and his arbitrators were not appeased. In a fury, they began stinging and biting old Rover ferociously. The old hound was in torment, but he took it like a citizen and patriot, like a Legionaire, a Storm Trooper, anybody you can think of who is exploited yet licks the hand that beats him.

And that is the end of the story. I know it is a defeatist ending, and that I should have shown old Rover revolting against his fleas. But has it happened yet in America? Not yet; and, maybe, for a few old Rovers never. They will always be humble, even grateful to their fleas.

MARX IN THE BLUE RIDGE

Down in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia, on the trail of the lonesome pine, a mountaineer was evicted from his hillside farm.

His name is Melancthon Cliser, and the town nearest his ancestral homestead is Panorama, Virginia.

The Shenandoah National Park is going through the region, but Mr. Cliser's neighbors think this a mighty poor reason for his eviction.

Some of them gathered at the scene of the eviction, and a few newspapermen from Washington came down, also. Trouble had been expected by the Sheriff. He knew the eviction was unpopular in the neighborhood.

But nothing much happened. Mr. Cliser was duly evicted, with all the majesty of the law. Deputies hauled furniture out of the old house, most of it pieces that had been in the family for four or five generations. The neighbors murmured their sympathy. The furniture lay in the roadway under the majestic shadow of Mary's Rock, high up in the mountains. The Sheriff had earned his fee, and the reporters were starting for home when one of the neighbors asked them a question.

It was just a lean old mountain-man in overalls, an old felt hat pulled down over his narrow eyes and wrinkled face. He had a cheek full of tobacco; he chewed and spat busily, and the reporters, having seen many moving pictures, knew at once that this was a veritable "hill-billy."

According to Eddy Gilmore's story in a Washington newspaper the old mountaineer edged up to the newspaper boys from Washington.

"You men are from the city?" he asked in a booming voice. "What do ye make of all this?"

One of the newspapermen said it was pretty bad to get booted out of your house and then to be threatened with arrest for trespassing. He said it reminded him faintly of some of the things that once happened in Russia.

Then according to the reporter, the old "hill-billy" drew nearer, his leathery wrinkled face lit with a strange new light.

"Russia?" he said. "Why do you talk about Russia?"

"I mean Russia when the Czar was holding the court," said the reporter.

"Oh," said the old man, "I thought you meant now."

"Well," another newspaperman put in, "what's it like in Russia now?"

"Now," began the old man, "this kind of thing couldn't happen in Russia."

"But it is happening," protested another reporter, who probably aspired to be one of Hearst's little lyon-levines.

The old man shook his gray head, hitched up his overalls, and said:

"No, suh, in Russia such things don't happen to a working man."

"Then he launched into a discussion of Soviet Russia and the preachments of Marx and Lenin that would have done credit to any backroom discussion," reports Mr. Gilmore, astonished.

And he goes on to say:

" 'Where did you ever hear about these things?' someone asked the old man."

" 'I read,' said the old man mountaineer. 'I was born right here in these rocks and brush but I taught myself to read. Why I've read *Das Kapital.*'

"Some of the other folks gathered around. Tall, lean, unshaven men from the mountains.

" 'He's read to us,' said one of them.

"The old man went on:

" 'We took up a collection here last year,' he said. 'I put eighteen dollars in it. You know what we did with it? We sent a boy from these very hills over to Russia. He's there now, working on a collective farm. He writes

us letters. He tells us all about things there. We hear from him once a month regular.'

"The old man looked at the other mountaineers. 'We sho' do,' they said. 'We sho' do.'"

I haven't read a finer little story than this in a long time. There is something immensely touching about this gaunt, illiterate old mountaineer who painfully taught himself to read Karl Marx, and then proceeded to bring the message to his neighbors.

Is he not a symbol of the working class? The same thing is going on all over the world; in mountain villages in Bulgaria, on the haciendas of Mexico, in the stinking coolie quarters of Shanghai, wherever men are starved and scorned by the capitalist system.

They cannot kill the working class. They cannot crush humanity. The spirit of man will find a way.

The Hearsts may tell us that Moscow gold and red outside agitators are responsible for the spread of Communism.

It wasn't Moscow gold, but Moscow truth, that found its way across five thousand miles into the dark corners of these Shenandoah mountains.

OUR GREATEST PATRIOT

"Bolshevism is at our gates. We can't afford to let it in. We have got to organize ourselves against it, and put our shoulders together and hold fast. We must keep America whole and safe and unspoiled. We must keep the worker away from red literature and red ruses; we must see that his mind remains healthy."

Who said that? Was it Bernarr Macfadden, Herbert

Hoover or Matthew Woll? Was it Father Coughlin? Was it Al Smith or William Randolph Hearst? Or Bishop Manning? Or General Hugh Johnson? Or Walter Lippmann, Isaac Don Levine or what?

Well, all of the gentlemen aforesaid and their numerous stuffed-shirt brothers have repeated this famous anti-Communist blurb in one form or another.

"A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism," wrote Karl Marx some seventy years ago in the Communist Manifesto. The same spectre today haunts the sleep of the American millionaires and their political and literary flunkeys.

But again, who do you think made the touching plea at the head of this column?

Can't you detect the style? Guess! Now guess again. Well, children, I see that you are stumped. Do you give up? You do?

Kiddies, the 100 per cent American who said that, the unselfish patriot, humanitarian and old-fashioned democrat who warned his fellow countrymen against Bolshevism, was none other than your kind old Uncle, Al Capone.

He made this immortal statement just before he was hauled off to serve ten years in Alcatraz Penitentiary, as a reward for his career of wholesale murder, bootlegging, coke-peddling, hijacking, and similar patriotic activity.

The statement appeared, fittingly enough, in *Liberty*, that patriotic organ of the muscle-bound old pornographer and fascist, Bernie Macfadden.

"Bolshevism is at our gates. We have got to organize ourselves against it," Al Capone implores us.

Many have heard the message of the great-hearted gunman. There are hundreds of large and small fascist organizations in America, all organized on this high moral

plane. You would think it comic at first that they should follow the lead of a convicted bandit; but it is really quite reasonable.

Fascism has no more social, economic or moral program than Al Capone. Mussolini demonstrated this in his bandit raid on Ethiopia. Has Hitler any program except war and gangster-imperialism?

Today capitalism can no longer defend itself on rational grounds. It is a cruel, irrational and outworn system, but its millionaire beneficiaries must fight for their lives, and so they adopt all manner of mystical phraseology.

"Race," "the nation," "Christianity," "spirituality," "the mystery of the blood," "faith"—this is their language.

Hitler defines the State as having "nothing to do with any definite economic conception or development." It is, he says, "the organization of a community homogeneous in nature and in feeling, for the better furtherance and maintenance of their type and the fulfillment of the destiny marked out for them by Providence." (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, English edition, page 69.)

And Mussolini, in defining fascism, speaks with contempt of "doctrine," and exalts "faith":

"Doctrine, beautifully defined and carefully elucidated, might be lacking: but there was to take its place something more decisive—faith." (Mussolini, *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, page 10.)

And Mosley's British Union of Fascists, in its short definition of Fascism, declares:

"We believe in the cooperation of all classes, in the solidarity of all units of a nation, and in justice. And in the mystery of patriotism."

Every demagogue and despoiler of the people has used

this exalted "mystical" language for his mask. It is the language of the Czar and the Kaiser, as well as of the fascists. It is the ritual used by the Emperor of Japan (descended from the Sun Goddess herself, no less, or you get your carcass slung in jail).

I must say that I prefer Al Capone. He was no mystic racketeer like the Hitlers and czars and the rest, and his racket was such a small one, and his pretenses so obvious.

But masses of Italians still take the words of a Mussolini seriously, and exalted by them, rush into the most sordid, brutal, senseless, bloody rape of a small nation.

Demagogy has become the chief enemy of the world masses today. It is the chief weapon of bloody fascism.

And what is this demagogy? asks R. Palme Dutt, in his classic work on fascism.

"The ruling classes will apply the epithet 'demagogue,' to every revolutionary leader of the masses who awakens them to the struggle to overthrow their oppressors, as realized at its highest in a Liebknecht or Lenin," he says. "But this is a glaring misuse of language, for the relation of the revolutionary leader to the masses is based on the strictest regard for objective truth . . . and struggle for liberation against all opposition, however powerful.

"Demagogy, on the other hand, is the art of playing on the hopes and fears, the emotions and the ignorance of the poor and suffering, for the *benefit of the rich and powerful!*

"It is the meanest of all arts. It is the art of fascism."

Al Capone, smart man, realized the advantages of demagogy to his racket. But he was too late. He should have hired fascist-minded ghost writers and press agents a lot sooner, and contacted Hearst and Macfadden. He

must be regretting this now in prison, and wishing he'd gone into the red-baiting racket in time.

THEY HATED JANE ADDAMS

"The doors of heaven did not swing open for Jane Addams when she passed on," I heard Bishop White of New Jersey shout in a radio sermon the other day. "Jane Addams was a pacifist, and untrue to her country! God does not love such people, and neither does any real red-blooded American. The life of this woman was a menace to the safety of the American family!

"There are Christians who say like Jane Addams that they do not believe in war. I do not believe in war myself, but I do believe in preparedness. It is the Christian duty of the church to uphold the flag of our country. People like Jane Addams would leave our beloved land open to the attacks of the foreigners. They are traitors to God and the flag!"

And on and on it went, the sermon. The Bishop (of what church I could not find out) had a bellowing, vehement voice that choked at times with a sort of arterio-sclerotic passion. He felt very strongly on the subject of Jane Addams and pacifism. Preaching in the name of a God who is said to be love, he expressed a coarse hate of this noble woman.

So this was a Christian bishop speaking! His voice reminded one of Hitler, as did the pathological brutality of his hatred. So there are Nazi bishops in America! And they hate people like Jane Addams, just as much as Hitler hates Albert Einstein!

I wish some of the liberals who are so complacent about

American "democracy," and who lull themselves to sleep every day with the Coué formula, "Oh, no, there can never be fascism in this country!" could have heard this American bishop's fascist sermon.

In all the words of mourning that were spoken at the passing of Jane Addams, one strain could be heard: "This woman was a saint, and everyone loved her."

Yes, Jane Addams was one of the finest flowers of all that is good in American civilization. She was beloved by thousands, and she deserved their love. But it is a liberal folly to ignore the fact that there are just as many thousands who hated her.

She was hated by the bloodthirsty generals and parsons against whose war plans she preached; she refused to support the World War, and many a jingo hates her since that time. She was hated by many of the slum riff-raff of Chicago; all the pimps and machine politicians whom she exposed. She was hated by the sweatshop bosses and the racketeering landlords against whose profits she fought.

She fought against race oppression, too, and was hated for it by the fascist dregs of Chicago. Yes, Jane Addams had many enemies; and their hatred is as good a monument to the ethical beauty of her life as is the love of her friends.

Jane Addams was a settlement house liberal. She was worlds away from being a Communist; but let the lesson sink deep into the heart of her liberal friends: the fascist business men and their gangsters hated her as much as they do any Communists.

Jane Addams was the mother of the settlement house idea in this country. This movement had a certain historic influence at one time. It was an expression of the troubled conscience of liberal members of the upper class, younger

sons who had come to understand that their father's wealth was wrung from the misery of the poor.

In Russia a similar group had created the Narodniki movement, their slogan being, "Let us go to the people." Tolstoy, for whom Jane Addams had a great devotion, was an example of the landowner with a bad conscience. The settlement house was a polite version of the Tolstoyan-Narodniki idea in America. These sons and daughters of the well-to-do went in groups to live in the slums. They set up communal houses in different neighborhoods, and invited the children of the workers to come for lessons in good manners, hygiene, athletics, cultural study and the like.

Many of these settlement house residents joined in the early fight for the trade unions. They fought for children's playgrounds, and other neighborhood needs. They agitated for social legislation, fought political corruption. Some of them used their observation of the slum life to write fine sociology and fiction.

Ernest Poole's *The Harbor*, and Arthur Bullard's *Comrade Yetta* and *A Man's World* (darn good examples of the "proletarian fiction" of an earlier time which some of our young writers might study), were produced by settlement house residents. Judge Ben Lindsey, Robert Morss Lovett, Robert Herrick and others came through the settlement house. Many of these men and women went through an intellectual evolution such as is pictured in the works of Poole and Bullard, and became leaders of the Socialist Party.

They were the first middle-class allies of the workers' movement in this country, pioneers of a historic transformation that has now achieved a mass character.

The settlement house laid much of the groundwork for

this necessary united front and Jane Addams was its chief pioneer.

INDIAN MASSACRE

THE other day, here in the stony wilderness of New York, I had the pleasure of meeting a fine woman of about fifty, a mother of children living on home relief. It happens that she is a pure-blooded Apache Indian. Once she traveled as a child with some of her tribe in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

This Apache matron is active in one of the Unemployment Councils of New York. There are other Indians living in New York, and some are even more radical than this woman—a few are Communists.

It is said that all the members of a certain Indian tribe out west have joined the Communist Party. I will not give the name of the tribe or where they live. I cannot give the name of this Apache mother, or suggest where the other Indians may be found in New York.

It would be dangerous for them. You see, like the foreign-born, they live under a cloud. If liberal Fanny Perkins' bloodhounds found these Indians out they might be deported back to where they came from.

Yes, this is no joke. These Indians, whose forefathers once owned this continent, now haven't a single right to life or liberty.

They are not allowed to vote. They are placed in the same legal status as children, idiots, criminals and the foreign-born. They are the so-called "wards of the government," which literally means, slaves. They are not supposed to leave the dreary reservations where the white

man's government once herded their forefathers with murderous guns.

If they are found in a city like New York, trying to live like any other workers, and entertaining any new political ideas, they would be immediately dumped back into the Bad Lands that are their reservations.

An Indian must not vote, or think, or feel, or act like a free and mature citizen. The fiction is, he is a "savage," and a gang of racketeering white politicians are his superiors, and have been assigned to "civilize" him.

For many decades these so-called Indian government agents assigned "to take care" of the Indians have lined their pockets with the crudest sort of blood-money. They have grown fat off the food, clothing and education of the helpless Indians. Their worst crime has been cultural; up till recently, these stupid grafters had a policy of stamping out all the old traditional culture of the Indians.

What did the ancient religious dances of the Indians mean to this gang of white government grafters? What did they know of the historic beauty of a race tradition? What did they know of any Indian history or the problems of a primitive nation suddenly thrust bodily into the midst of an alien culture?

They tried to wipe out the Indian culture. But what did they have for a substitute? Instead of the ancient lore, they gave the young Indians an inferior grammar school and trade school education. They gave them whisky, and jazz, and the cheapest and most vulgar side of American slum life.

They broke up the old healthy way of life that for thousands of years had nurtured powerful bodies and poetic minds among the Indian tribes. Now the Indians learned the beauty of white civilization; they lived in shacks, in-

stead of wigwams, they wore shoes and pants instead of blankets and moccasins. And they began to die like flies of the white man's diseases; tuberculosis, alcoholism and syphilis. This is what the superior race brought to them.

Historically, the Indians were "savages," and once the word meant a lower stage of culture. Modern anthropologists, however, have changed the meaning of the word "savage."

Today, it means only that a nation is living, not at any inferior, but at a younger stage of culture. You do not say that a child is inferior to a man. He is merely younger than an adult. All humanity once passed through this youthful stage of culture, and sections of it, like the Africans or Polynesians, or our own red Indians, have for historic reasons, lingered there.

If the Indians had not been massacred, exploited and degraded by the white imperialists, if they had been allowed to develop normally from historic childhood to manhood in their own way, they would have been able to catch up historically.

This has been proved in the Soviet Union, where millions of semi-Oriental nomad tribes, living at the same stage of culture as our Indians, have developed so marvellously that their own new civilization is only a decade behind.

They already have a written literature, and they work big collective farms, and have learned to use all the scientific big tools that make modern industry.

This is because the Soviet policy did not degrade or exploit these younger brothers, but helped them, educated them, and set their feet on the modern path, where they soon learned their own way.

Imperialism sees primitive nations like Africans or Indians only as a source of profits. It destroys whole cultures

and peoples in its mad lust for money. But it hides the fact, for instance, that for thousands of years the Africans had a well-rounded culture of their own—a great body of traditional poetry and science, a system of law, the finest sculpture, pottery, iron-work and other traditional arts.

For more than a century the white American robbers managed to hide the fact that our own Indians had a culture, too. But devoted scientists have searched out the story, and now we know a great deal about the poetry, music, dancing, philosophy and science of the American Indian.

The Mayan calendar stone in Yucatan (which state is thought to be the cradle of the Indian culture) was a stone recording the high state of Indian astronomy. They could foretell eclipses, and the revolutions of the planets. They had gone into the higher mathematics, and who knows what else?

All this was destroyed by the whites. The Indians were enslaved and degraded. No wonder many of them today are beginning to find their way to Communism. Only under Communism, as in the Soviet Union, is it possible for each of the nations to develop its own soul. Capitalism exploits and crushes the sacred soul of the people. But Communist internationalism means a grand symphony of nations, each singing its own wonderful song.

A LOVE LETTER FOR FRANCE

It's sad, wet, cold, the gray Atlantic and the gray skies are drab as eternity or a hungry man's sleep in a flophouse and the people in the third class are seasick and all my thoughts are of Paris.

I think of the easy-going, friendly city, Paris of the innumerable fine bookshops, Paris of the chestnut trees, colleges, gardens and crazy taxicabs, Paris with its lovely girls and fat, vain clerks and shopkeepers with the elaborate whiskers and the Legion of Honor. I think of the spirit of revolution and art that haunts every street and I think of the workers of Paris—these gay, ardent, talented people who have such an instinct for fine living.

Our "exiles" have slandered Paris. I never wanted to go there because of their tourist café gossip. They were escapists and Paris was their opium.

But now I am glad that for even a month I was permitted to see this Paris, so different from their adolescent dreams.

France has had three revolutions and the workers have never lost their self-respect. Waiters will familiarly discuss politics with you, or literature, or your family problems. This is the most democratic land I have ever been in, outside of the Soviet Union.

Everywhere, in subways, streets and parks, one meets soldiers—France has the largest standing army in Europe. It is a conscript army of young peasant boys with fresh naïve faces, just up from the provinces. They are the least militaristic soldiers I have known—no swagger or toughness, just boys in uniform, sons of the people.

It is hard to put the thing in words, but the attitude of the people to these soldier boys is different from that of Americans or Germans to their own army. It is more like the Soviet Union—the people act as if these boys belonged to them and show no self-consciousness in their presence.

And every day, in the papers, one reads of strikes and protests in the barracks—the boys, too, refuse to be considered mechanical robots in a military scheme, but insist

on their human rights as workers and peasants. Every day reports come of another regiment of young conscripts that as it marches home after the year of service, raises the Red Flag and sings the *Internationale* in the streets.

The fascists will not easily turn this army against the people.

Everywhere one sees cripples—men without legs, arms, noses, faces, the mutilated of the last war. There are so many of them that special seats are reserved for them in the subways and buses. Most of the Army of Mutilés are Socialists and Communists. It is their miserable pensions that Laval and the bankers are attacking, "to economize" and to save the bankers' gold.

It is the wages of the state functionaries, too, that are being attacked. These state employes are organized in trade unions and are in the United Front. I attended a meeting of delegates from all the customs houses of France, deliberating under pictures of Lenin and Stalin. This radicalization of the rank and file of the state apparatus infuriates the banker-fascists. They are always wailing about the "Moscow" enemy within the state machine. Fools, hogs, they themselves have done it with their shameless taxation of the workers' life, their wage cuts and their currency juggling!

Life is more expensive in France than in New York. And the wages for those who work are so much pitifully less that one wonders how the people manage to keep alive.

Unemployment is increasing rapidly. France was the last country to be hit by the crisis, but now this grows in momentum like a rockslide. You find signs of it in Paris—every morning, on my way to the Writers' Congress, I saw a couple out of Stienlen, a ragged old woman and her man, resting in the same doorway, her poor old weary head

on his lap, "waiting for nothing." You see them around, lying under the bridges, the groups of pale, hungry men sleeping on newspapers.

The price of horse meat has doubled and wine is dearer. There are state taxes on everything, even on the rent. The Seine flows through Paris; and along its banks there are hundreds of fishermen. Maybe this looks picturesque to tourists, but I know why these working men are not at work, but are fishing in daylight—it is not for pleasure. When you travel through our own South you will see Negro men and women fishing at every stream—and also, not for fun. It is because they are out of work and are fishing desperately for their next meal.

The fascists propose to solve this all a la Hearst, by deporting the foreign workers, for whom life has already been rendered so difficult.

They propose to solve it by increasing the army budget (the Armament Trust subsidizes the fascists). They propose to solve it by abolishing the republic and regimenting the French people so that they will learn to enjoy starvation, because it is patriotic (but the Metal Trust, which subsidizes the fascists, has never paid bigger dividends).

But the polite, the gay, the passionate French people still dance to accordions in the little *bal musettes* and drink their wine and kiss their girls. In the open air markets where the workers buy their cheap meat and vegetables they also are careful to buy little bouquets of field flowers, blue lupins and white lilies for the breakfast table. Nothing will crush their spirit. The subway guards openly read *Humanité*, the Communist daily, or *Le Populaire*, the Socialist paper.

Everywhere the great tide rolls up of the United Front,

soon strong enough, perhaps, too for a government.* The French people are not ready for revolution. But they are passionately aroused against the fascists, the bankers and wage-cutters. Thirty percent of France now votes Socialist or Communist. If the exploiters press the people too far, there *will* be a revolution.

A little fact: the achievements of the Soviet Union are daily described and praised in the republican and socialist press of France; you would think you were reading our own Communist *Daily Worker*. Leon Blum, the outstanding Socialist leader, for years opposed the United Front; but I chuckled when I read a recent article in which he spoke warmly of our "good friends, the Communists."

The Abe Cahans and Jim Oneals, those poisonous enemies of the Soviet Union and the United Front against fascism, ought perhaps to be deported to France and there forced to study the program of their own party.

In France, anyone who tries to break up the United Front is considered an enemy of the working class and an ally of the fascists. I wonder whether one ought not to feel this way in America, too.

I spent one day walking around the Jewish quarter of Paris with Isaac Babel, the artist who fought under Budenny and who wrote *Red Cavalry*.

As everyone must now know, writers are not at all like their books. Some are much better and some are amazingly rottener. Babel is neither better nor worse but different. He is stocky and baldheaded, with a kind, broad, homely face and he doesn't seem like a poet or ex-cavalryman but like the principal of a village school.

* Written in July, 1935, before the victory of the People's Front in France.

If you will read his work, you will find that his is an intensely romantic nature, which sometimes distorts reality because he is vainly trying, like Arthur Rimbaud, to pierce behind all its veils. But the frenzied poet, Isaac Babel, for the past six years has been the manager of a big horse-breeding collective farm in the North Caucasus. He had come to Paris for the Writers' Congress, because he is a famous Soviet writer, but he was also visiting French stud farms to study their methods.

(Sholokov, the author of *Quiet Flows the Don*, recently took a trip abroad, too, and spent his vacation not among the literary men of Europe but in studying the model dairy farms of Denmark—he is passionately interested in cows. The Soviets are developing a new sort of writer in a world that has grown tired of tales about the dark souls of writers.)

Yes, Babel is a practical and humorous human being. He made one of the most original speeches at the Congress. He sat simply at a table and chatted in French with an audience of several thousand, telling them anecdotes about the Soviet peasants and the naive way in which they went about the historic task of acquiring culture; witty, tender, proud anecdotes that made one see intimately the new Soviet life.

Babel loves France and Paris. I was glad to hear him say this, for I myself had feared to say it, thinking it was American naiveté on my part and also because I remembered the "exiles" and their escapism.

"You cannot be a writer until you know French," said Babel earnestly. "No writer can acquire a feeling for literary form unless he has read the French masters in their own tongue. Of this I am sure."

(There must be something in this dogmatic theory;

after visiting the gardens of Versailles and the Luxembourg, that affected me like some strange and beautiful dream, I was impelled, for the first time in my life, to attempt the writing of a sonnet!)

Babel and I sat in a Jewish restaurant on a Friday night in Paris and I told him about the East Side and he told me about Odessa.

He was surprised and glad to hear about the militant Jewish workers of New York. "In the Soviet Union one forgets one is a Jew. The whole race question has already become dim, like ancient history. But here in Paris it comes back to me." Babel is soon to publish a new book, an experiment in a new form, but the novel that he has been writing for six years he isn't satisfied with; this horse-breeder has one of the most painful artistic consciences in the Soviet land.

André Malraux is lean, intense and young, the restless aviator type. I saw him first in the office of the Congress, where he was swamped like a commissar in a mass of organization detail. He was one of the active organizers of the Writers' Congress, spending weeks at the "dirty work," like Aragon and Jean Richard-Bloch and the others. These French writers throw themselves into what they do with passion and directness. How is one to explain it? America is supposed to be the land of energy, but so many of our authors seem afraid of *doing* anything. It is as if working with other human beings were somehow dangerous. But Malraux did not seem afraid of losing his "individuality."

And he was not afraid of banging on the table and shouting at the top of his voice like a human being when the Trotzkyites made their mean little disruption foray and tried to turn a United Front congress against fascism

into a demonstration against the Soviet Union. Malraux was chairman at that session.

Aldous Huxley, lanky, pale, boyish, shy, was more like some of our own intellectuals. Is it because Anglo-Saxons still believe with the philistines of commerce that there is something unmanly and unworthy about being a writer? Only the stock that produced a Shakespeare has brought this attitude into the world. It is a real mystery.

After the Congress ended, Malraux left for Algiers, to address a huge anti-fascist meeting. The fascists threatened to break up the demonstration and to attack Malraux. In the Socialist *Populaire*, I read the lyric report of its correspondent, who said, "Our brave young Socialists and Communists formed a defense corps and were sufficient protection for Comrade Malraux, this author who charmed us all with his ardor, his intellect, his youth and his devotion to our great cause." That's what French authors are like these days; would that a few more British and American authors might learn from them.

Or from Martin Andersen-Nexo.

It is years since I first read the working-class epic, *Pelle the Conqueror*. I have never had the lust to meet famous authors; the best of them is in their books. But I had always wanted to meet the great Andersen-Nexo, whose book had such a deep influence on my youth.

He is a solid and powerful man, like some ruddy sea-captain or master-workman. He is simple, like a worker; he likes babies and wine and food and fresh air and working with his hands and jokes and simple men and women; he despises stuffed shirts, be they authors or politicians, and he has that organic hatred of the parasites, the emotion that finally crystallizes into Communism.

The King of Denmark once invited him for a visit to the palace. Andersen-Nexo informed the King he had no objections to meeting him but since the King knew his address, he could call on him first, on Martin Andersen-Nexo, good shoemaker, trade unionist and proletarian author, as good as any King. The King dropped the whole matter.

Andersen-Nexo told us many stories, gay and sad, about his life. He is a happy man, because he has lived for the working class and every day this class comes nearer to its goal. It happened to be his sixty-fifth birthday and several of us made a little party of the event. We toasted him in champagne and told him (Ralph Fox, James Hanley and Pearl Binder of England, two Australian authors and myself were there) what his books had meant to us in the English-speaking lands.

"But meeting you younger revolutionary writers means more to me," said the old fighter. "I am happy when I see our youth and know that the great work will never die." It sounds, perhaps, like politeness as I write it, but it is a feeling all good revolutionists have as they grow on in years. It is what keeps them happy.

"The first portion of Pelle, the childhood, is largely invention. I wanted a story of lyric pathos and tenderness to win my readers. You see, at that time there had been nothing like a proletarian novel in Europe. They would have flung my book away had I plunged at once into the story of a trade-union organizer and his spiritual life. The critics would have been bored with such a vulgar theme. They could accept only lurid, sordid, sensational tales of the workers' degradation. But I wanted to write about a class-conscious worker who was a conqueror of life, not a victim. So I had to use strategy and I began my novel

with pathos and weakness." (The trilogy was written in 1905-7.)

"But the latter portions are not invention—they are my own story. Like Pelle, I was apprenticed to a shoemaker and worked at this trade for many years. Then I helped form our trade unions and was one of the leaders in our great general strike. Yes, I have lived as a worker for many years; only out of the depths of revolutionary experience will come our proletarian art.

"As to form; it has never troubled me. I believe that one must write from the heart; the form will follow naturally. One must, of course, knead and knead the material; slow, as the proverb has it—slowly one must grow a tree or write a book or make love. But above all, follow the deepest instincts of your youthful heart. Give my heartfelt greetings to the youth of your countries."

Paul Vaillant-Couturier, a rugged Gascon with a barrel chest, innocent blue eyes and the free and fearless manners of a pioneer, is the author of some six novels, a book of poetry and as many political essays. He is a horseman, a crack shot, an aviator and a boxer. He fought all through the war in the tank corps. He is one of the editors of *Humanité*, the Communist daily and one of the Party leaders on the central committee and also the Mayor of Ville Juif, a workers' suburb of Paris.

About a year ago, Comrade Paul was given a six-month term in prison by a fascist judge for something he had written. He was naturally bored with his vacation and persuaded the prison authorities to permit him to have some paint and canvas. Paul had been too busy to experiment in this art, which, like all good Frenchmen, he adored. So in prison he painted and painted and accumulated can-

vases. When he came out, his friends persuaded him to hold an exhibition. It made quite a stir; even the bourgeois critic praised the prison artist.

But now Paul is up to his neck in Party work again. He is one of the most popular Communists in France. His painting adventure has not handicapped him politically. I wonder what would happen to Clarence Hathaway if he began to write sonnets or to Earl Browder if he should join the Composers' Collective and write proletarian songs. Bob Minor felt it necessary to suppress his great art in order to do political work. Nobody would have felt that way in France, I believe.

Comrade Vaillant-Couturier is also a remarkable cook. Babel and I visited his suburb with him one Friday morning. We first visited the clinic, where for less than fifty cents workers get a thorough medical examination, with X-rays and the finest apparatus. (Unemployed free.) Then Mayor Paul sat in his office and the workers poured in with their troubles—unemployed workers, mostly, who'd been cut off relief and the like. Then Mayor Paul went shopping in the butcher shops and groceries, and smiling chauffeurs, street cleaners and housewives came up to shake hands, saying "Comrade!"

At home, the Mayor turned into a master cook; I tasted nothing better in France, home of the world's greatest cooks, than his sauces, delicate as the herbs of the springtime.

As we were sitting at lunch, the bell rang. A very fat and stylish man of the middle class came puffing in. He mopped his brow and talked to Comrade Paul earnestly. He was the owner of a laundry. During the war he had served with Comrade Paul in the tanks and was one of his best friends. For years, however, they hadn't seen

each other; but during the past year, this man, a Radical Republican, grew deeply aroused against the fascist menace. This had brought him around to seeing Comrade Paul now and again.

Well, the day before, a friend of his who owned a café had had a group of fascists eating in his place and had listened in on their talk. They were gleefully planning, it seems, to make an armed raid soon on the home of Comrade Paul.

"You must be on your guard, Paul," said the fat, respectable businessman, earnestly. "Whenever there is a sign of trouble, you must phone me at once. I will bring my friends with our guns and we will finish these people."

Paul thanked him and said he would be sure to phone. When the friend had left, he smiled and said, "Do you see how some of our businessmen feel these days?"

The Sunday before that was one of the great days at the Communist suburb, Ville Juif. A new main boulevard that runs to Fountainebleu was to be opened. The Communist suburb had decided to name it after Maxim Gorky. Everywhere on the walls were red posters calling on the people to assemble in homage to the great proletarian writer, Maxim Gorky.

Ten thousand men, women and children were gathered on the hot asphalt of a burning summer day. The fireman's band played the *Internationale.* André Gide unveiled the name-plaque and Michael Koltzov spoke briefly.

Red flags, gray old leonine workers in red sashes and velvet pants, smoking their pipes; the lively, happy Pioneer kids in their red scarfs and khaki shorts; gymnasts, mothers in shawls pushing baby carriages, the lean, fighting youth, in berets and overalls; workers with big mous-

taches and beards, wearing caps; shopkeepers and clerks, the people of France.

Vaillant-Couturier introduced André Gide as "our great comrade who has risen to the defense of world culture and the working class." And the crowd of proletarians shouted, "Vive la culture!" André Gide dedicated the Maxim Gorky Boulevard. He was deeply moved. He said later it was the first time in his sixty years that he had spoken to workers at a demonstration in the streets.

Then we marched for several miles behind the firemen's band to the athletic stadium. Songs, cries, slogans; and from the sidewalks, other workers cheered from their front doors and little gardens.

I will never forget a fiery old man in the procession who was the delegate of the Paris Commune. He shouted and sang at the top of his powerful lungs, this rugged septuagenarian, and by the hand he led a little boy of three.

The old Communards have an organization in Paris and he was here to represent them, dressed in a red sport shirt, like Garibaldi's, a big red sash and an armband that said, "Vive la Commune, 1871." He sweated with excitement, his eyes flashed, his long white hair waved in the breeze. He taught the little boy, who was carrying a red pennant, to raise his little fist in the Red Front salute and to sing the *Internationale.*

I talked to the old Communard. His name was Louis Gomet and he was a Socialist. "Ah, it is a great day! I am rejoiced to see this day of the young. If my wife were only here! She is not in her first youth, you understand, but still charming. Yes, charming! Do you know, I spent three days in prison last month for fighting a fascist in a café. He had insulted my Communard shirt. Here is the

warrant they served me. I am proud of it. Here, little one, let's sing the *Carmagnole.* I will show you the way we sang it on the barricades."

We visit the Karl Marx Children's School, one of the finest in the world. Designed by André Durcat and a collective of Red architects, erected by the Red carpenters, stone-masons and plumbers of Ville Juif, in the year 1932. The first modern children's school in France. Architects and other visitors have come to see it from all over the world. It is well worth seeing; an entrancing monument to a new and freer life, built in the midst of the old.

I have always had a slight prejudice against modernist architecture. Much of it seems faddist, a straining to be different at any cost. Inhuman and cerebral exercises by bourgeois artists who are removed from the people, it gives one no joy. But this school is both modernist and human and a joy to the heart and the mind.

It was built, not to please the architects, but the children. But the architects were Communists and loved and understood the children, so they too found a joy in the task. Great glass walls everywhere; so that the sunlight pours in on the children all day; it is like being outdoors, even in the wintertime. Beautiful yellow and blue tiling, murals everywhere, to delight the children; beautiful laboratories for little scientists, great porches to play games in on rainy days; marvelous maps and a dining room and model kitchen; classrooms that are interesting as little theatres; a children's palace, clean, happy and bright with color, sunlight and a new spirit.

All the Socialist and Communist suburbs are now building such schools for the workers' children. But in wealthy New York, under capitalism, many children still spend

their days in dismal old firetrap buildings, where the toilets stink and the air smells like prison and the teachers are driven like factory slaves.

A little banquet had been arranged for the visiting authors in the dining room of the school. Here, surrounded by the workers, we drank toasts in champagne to Karl Marx, to the Soviet Union, to the Communist Mayor Paul Vaillant-Couturier and to the Socialist and Communist workers of Ville Juif.

Then back to the stadium; where through the loud-speakers, each of us made a brief address of salutation—Alexei Tolstoy, Michael Koltzov, Louis Aragon, André Gide, Isaac Babel, Erich Weinert and others. And as each speaker ended, a worker of Ville Juif stepped forward with a great bouquet of roses, lilies, gladioli and fern, all from the local gardens, and presented it to the visiting author and kissed him on both cheeks.

Good-bye, Paris; au revoir, beautiful city that for centuries has held the world's imagination. I am going back to my own raw, young city and land that I love painfully, the way a man loves a woman who is bad for him. France, your devoted sons love you in a different manner. Did I not hear Leon Moussinac, the gifted and passionate Communist novelist and critic, argue with great fervor that a revolution was necessary soon, if the glorious wines of France were to be saved, if the traditions of the great vineyards were not to be destroyed by the capitalist depression?

Au revoir, Paris. Your generals and bankers love blood and gold but your ditch-diggers and machinists love flowers and song and love. Your clerks dream of painting

and poetry and your scientists and artists are ready to fight on the barricades for humanity against fascism.

Au revoir. I can understand why Americans, like the rest of the world, have ever been fascinated by your charm. Some of them have found only the tourist perversion and filth in you but your real self has been revealed to the artist and the revolutionist. Au revoir. I shall never forget your streets where the great story of humanity is revealed on every corner, where one meets memorials to a Danton, a Pasteur, a Claude Bernard, where side by side with an ancient monastery one finds a statue to a young student who was tortured by the Inquisition or to the first printer of libertarian books, his arms tied behind his back as he proudly awaits the executioner.

The great tradition of democracy and science that began here in the Renaissance hovers with wings of terror and beauty over every one of your alleys. Paris, it is an old story to you but to me it was still thrilling to travel by subway to stations bearing such names as Danton, Jean Jaures, Saint Simon, Place de la Bastille and to walk on streets named after Balzac, Baudelaire, Laplace and Lenin.

Au revoir, dear Paris. Now I know that the bourgeois dilettante lied about you. You are not a city of cheap vice and easy emotions. You are deep, serious and passionate unto the death over the great human things. You have always been so. It is no accident that you were the birthplace of the Commune, which served as model for Marx and Lenin and the proletarian democracy of the Soviets.

Your working people, as I studied them in mass meetings, in cafés, in streets, have a collective soul beautiful as

anything I have seen. Hungry, cheated and oppressed, they have never been degraded. They have a deathless instinct for culture and beauty and through blood and anguish, you must beat the fascists, for they would destroy all this, they will take this soul of your people and make of it a dull, senseless cog in a brutal military machine.

The free soul of French culture and the French people is too good for such a fate. But the Soviets will release all this mass genius, this wonderful spirit. Your people have traveled far, they are ready to be a super-race, when the wisdom of your past is incorporated in the daily life, when culture will be free to all, when democracy releases every talent, when workers and intellectuals build a new socialist France.

Les Soviets partout! Soviets everywhere! Until then, au revoir, Paris, and accept the gratitude and hopes of another infatuated American!